# CHAOS AND COSMOS

*On the Image in Aesthetics and Art History*

KAREN LANG

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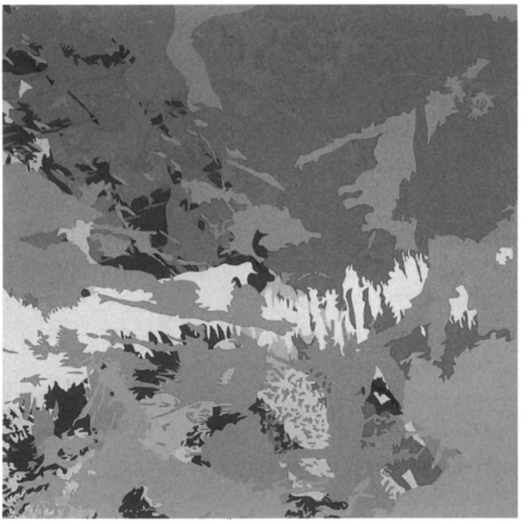

Karen Lang

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*For Flora Mei Yan*
*happy chaos and radiant cosmos*

I tell you: one must have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star. I tell you: you still have chaos in you.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

The gaze of the imagination is a gaze within the canon, not in accordance with the canon.

WALTER BENJAMIN

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The shape of this book suggested itself during my first semester at USC, as I taught Theories and Methods of Art History, a seminar required of all incoming graduate students. In the midst of my preparations I discovered two reassuring things: first, primary texts and critical commentary on these texts could be found in English, in a variety of sources; second, there was much to admire in several studies about the lives and work of the best-known art historians. And yet, no book took as its focus the questions, theories, and stakes that animated art history during its formation as an autonomous academic enterprise in Germany. Undertaking this project, I hoped to make this complex and rich history more readily available to an English-speaking audience; also, focusing on foundational questions and ideas, I set out to show why art history is an inherently theoretical practice. While none of what follows has been presented previously in the form it takes here, earlier versions of my arguments have appeared in *The Art Bulletin* 79, no. 3 (September 1997): 413–439, published by the College Art Association, and in the edited volumes *Art History, Aesthetics, Visual Studies* (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2002); *The Lure of the Object* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); and *Performing the Body/Performing the Text* (London: Routledge, 1999).

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*Chaos and Cosmos*

# *Introduction*

## Theory Begins with Looking

> Technically, every work of art comes into being in the same way as the cosmos—by means of catastrophes, which ultimately create out of the cacophony of the various instruments that symphony we call the music of the spheres.
>
> WASSILY KANDINSKY

In *Theaetetus,* Plato's dialogue on epistemology, Socrates and Theaetetus attempt to answer the question, what is knowledge?[1] Unfortunately for us, perhaps, their venture concludes in undecidability. At the end of the dialogue we do not know what knowledge is, though we have a better idea of what it is not. Searching for a sufficient answer to their question, Socrates and Theaetetus chart the movement from seeing to representing to knowing—the journey that turns what is seen into what is known. Socrates offers the wax block and the aviary as models of the soul. These models, which do account for the inscription and retention of knowledge, are judged to be insufficient. Visually appealing though they are, Socrates' models do not provide for the separation of subject and object necessary for the creation of knowledge. As Plato's dialogue suggests, knowledge depends on a point of view outside the scene of perception. It is precisely this point of view that enables the transformation from sight to insight.

To see, to represent, to know. Each act involves the engagement with an object of perception, either an object in the perceptible world or an object in the mind. Each act, in turn, may be correlated with a point of view: Seeing enlists the empirical viewpoint; representing draws on an objective point of view; while pure knowing operates from a transcendental

vantage point. In this sense, seeing, representing, and knowing are all related to theory. Theory, whose Greek stem is *thea,* means to look, to view, to contemplate. Interestingly, an archaic use of the word implies "a spectator at festival theater performances, athletic contests, and other public events." *Thea* also connotes the contemplation of *theos,* the divine.[2] In the transition from looking to contemplation—in the movement from seeing to representing to knowing—theory gathers force as hypothesis and instrument. Simply put, theory begins with looking.

The word "theory" customarily applies to speculation, to schemes or systems of ideas that aim to account for a group of facts or phenomena. Entering the space between object and analyst, theory effects the separation necessary for "objective" knowledge. When employed as an instrument, theory moves from the consideration of the individual object to the contemplation of a field of inquiry. The viewpoint that is furthest removed from the perceptible phenomenon promotes the deepest understanding of it, because from this remove the phenomenon may be conceived and analyzed within a field of inquiry. It follows that only the transcendental viewpoint—poised outside the scene of perception—may lead to the discovery of the underlying principles of objects and their correlation within a unified field of inquiry. The connection of the theoretical gaze with the divine is suggested in this transcendental point of view.

The meanings that cluster around seeing, representing, and knowing, as well as their respective points of view, can all be found in *Theaetetus.* Midway in the dialogue, following a mention of winged thoughts, Socrates tells Theaetetus about Thales, the founder of Greek natural philosophy, who, "studying the stars . . . and gazing aloft," fell into a well. A "witty and amusing Thracian servant girl made fun of him because, she said, he was wild to know about what was up in the sky but failed to see what was in front of him and under his feet." "The same joke," Socrates concludes, "applies to all those who spend their lives in philosophy."[3]

Along with a certain classical *Schadenfreude,* the Thales anecdote implies the empirical, objective, and transcendental points of view. The empirical point of view concentrates its energies on "seeing" in order to seize directly an object in the perceptible world. The objective point of view brings an object into the mind of the beholder. Gazing up into the heavens—which is to say, into what he cannot know—Thales fails to see what is right "in front of him and under his feet." For her part, the Thracian servant girl, who views the scene as an outsider, lends the so-called objective perspective. From this point of view she renders her judgment of Thales, which takes the form of laughter. If, according to Aristotle, all phi-

losophy begins in wonder, then the Thales anecdote suggests that without proper coordinates it can surely lead one astray.[4]

While Plato's dialogue does not provide a clear and distinct understanding of what knowledge is, it nevertheless suggests a method through which knowledge might be gained. This method follows the arc of theory—from spectacle to speculation; from seeing to representing to knowing; from the empirical to the objective to the transcendental point of view. We might say, as well, that this method travels the course of the human condition—from seeing what is in front of us to our desire to reach beyond the given, so as to know what it is that we cannot see. Perhaps a double irony is signaled in the "joke" of *Theaetetus.* One irony is Thales' attempt to bring knowledge to light, only to slip into darkness himself. Another irony reverberates from the philosopher's drive to know the laws underpinning the cosmos. Where danger might lie in wait for those who, in their pursuit of knowledge, fail to see what is in right front of them, imagining the unseen is essential for scientific knowledge. Hypothesis, the human ability to imagine the unseen, performs the conjecture necessary for pure knowledge. As the philosopher Ernst Cassirer wrote, "it is upon a peculiar interweaving of 'real' and 'not-real' elements . . . that every scientific theory rests."[5]

Taking up the object in the mind involves an act of representing, or what in German is termed *Anschauung.* A mental picture of the perceptible world, *Anschauung* marks the turn from perception to apperception, as it enables one to think about an object rather than merely to perceive it. Friedrich Schiller, in a letter of 1793, elegantly described this move from seeing to representing. "The necessity of nature, which in the stage of mere sensation ruled him with undivided authority, begins at the stage of reflection to relax its hold upon him. In his senses there results a momentary peace; time itself, the eternally moving, stands still; and, as the divergent rays of consciousness converge, there is reflected against a background of transience an image of the infinite, namely form."[6] Redolent of a time past, Schiller's phrasing captures the transformation that occurs between seeing and representing. Rendering the perceptible object into a mental picture, *Anschauung* is not only an act of representing but also a means of creating *form.* One may certainly disagree with Schiller's evocation of the nature of form as a still point in an otherwise turning world. Nevertheless, Schiller does convey the end to which the desire for *form* might lead: namely, to "an image of the infinite."

When asked why he was able to conceive the special theory of relativity when his fellow scientists could not, Einstein put it down to *Anschauung*—to his ability to see beyond the facts; to his facility for forming

mental pictures of systems that could not be seen with his physical eyes.[7] This example demonstrates the interweaving of the act of representation, the objective point of view, and the notion of objectivity. If under the objective vantage point the object is taken up by the mind, then the notion of objectivity sets its sights on "seeing" the object from the point of view of *theos,* the divine. Encompassing the point of view of every person, pure objectivity is also the viewpoint of no one person in particular. In this sense, pure objectivity, the gaze of the divine, is also "the view from nowhere," as Thomas Nagel has put it.[8] Aiming for an understanding that penetrates beyond what can be seen with the physical eye, the transcendental vantage point sets its sights on pure knowing, a knowing that takes flight from the perceptible world in order to grasp what Schiller called "an image of the infinite," or what Einstein, for his part, described as the general physical laws underpinning the cosmos.

Concentrating on the image, aesthetics, and the discipline of art history, this book follows the arc of theory as it studies the turn from chaos to cosmos. Where chaos is here understood as a jumble or aggregate of sensuous impressions confronting the artist or observer, cosmos refers to the rendering of perceptible and intellectual data into form and system. This book, then, travels the course outlined in the epigraph by Kandinsky: transforming chaos into cosmos requires one to strike out from catastrophe toward the music of the spheres.[9] Cosmos, in the ancient Greek, means both world and ornament. Both senses of this word find their place here, as I study aspects of systematicity and system, figuration and form. My use of the word "image" includes within its cache of meanings the aesthetic phenomenon, the work of art, and the mental image, or *Anschauung.* In either sense of the word, "image" implies an act of representation. Reflecting critically on the image in aesthetics and art history, I examine empirical, objective, and transcendental points of view, analyzing how each engages in the movement from chaos to cosmos. In particular, I demonstrate how points of view transform aesthetic phenomena into historical objects, and even objects of knowledge.[10]

At the heart of this study lies the power of aesthetic phenomena to resist the pressures of the transcendental vantage point. Aesthetic objects, I argue, ultimately defy our desire to find a unitary "truth" or meaning in them. As the struggle waged by Panofsky in his early theoretical essays (1915–32) makes clear, the art historian's pursuit of pure knowledge will never yield the laws underpinning aesthetic phenomena. In following the transformation from chaos to cosmos, this book underscores the manifold nature, or eloquence, of aesthetic objects. Along with its reference to the meaning of the word "theory," the title of my introduction im-

plies that aesthetic objects are theoretical on their own terms. Bearing this in mind, I inquire into what we might learn from works of art. Correspondingly, I ask what our efforts to situate aesthetic objects within fields of inquiry, or historical systems, might teach us about disciplinarity, and ourselves.

I concentrate on the early years of art history as an autonomous academic practice in Germany. In the period I address most specifically, the 1880s to 1940, the pressures and innovations of modernization were felt acutely in that country. It was a time when modernity was felt in the full measure of its break with the traditions and customs of the past; a time, as well, when the strains of modernism changed the modes and meanings of works of art. That many in Germany felt the tension—social, cultural, and national—mounting before World War I is registered in the range of textual and artistic documents of this period. Chaos and cosmos are not simply conceptual categories under which sensuous and intellectual responses to the world can be arrayed; these terms also serve as denominators for an age in flux.

For Aby Warburg, chaos and cosmos figure the contours of his epoch. Consider his notes for a lecture on the Pueblo Indians of North America, which he would later deliver to an audience at the sanatorium where he was residing as a patient.

> But now, in March 1923, in Kreuzlingen, in a closed institution, where I have the sensation of being a seismograph assembled from the wooden pieces of a plant that has been transplanted from the East to the fertile northern German plains and onto which an Italian branch was grafted, I let the signs that I receive come out of me, because in this epoch of chaotic decline even the weakest has a duty to strengthen the will of the cosmic order.[11]

Here Warburg charts the itinerary of his own genealogy—from the roots of his Jewish ancestors in the East to his residence in Hamburg, the site where he founded the famous library that bears his name, to the "graft" of an Italian branch onto his German-Jewish heritage. This branch signifies the wellspring of his scholarly energies, namely Italian art and culture of the Quattrocento. Studying this period, Warburg inquired into the very impulses—the psychological desires and discontents—associated with the transformation of chaos into pictorial form. As we shall see, "a duty to strengthen the will of the cosmic order" was not only felt by the citizens of Germany who sought to transform a landscape devastated by war. In the years preceding and following World War I, the urge to order

was also pursued by academic practitioners of art history in Germany, who sought to transform their field into a suitably "scientific," or systematic, academic discipline (*Kunstwissenschaft*).

How might the art historian begin to transform the chaos of aesthetic phenomena into the order of a unified field of inquiry? Max Dessoir, founder of the influential journal *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, suggests a possible starting point when he directs art historians to do what the philosophers have done throughout the ages, namely, to take the starry skies as their model: "Because all stars are subjected to the same law," he explains, "every star moves into its own course without disturbing the course of any other. The binding law for us, however, is: knowledge of art through the art of knowledge."[12] Beginning in 1915, Erwin Panofsky began a suite of theoretical essays that addressed "the art of knowledge" as this might apply to works of art. Seeking to establish the general principles which underlay the artwork, Panofsky hoped to arrest and array aesthetic phenomena within a unified field of inquiry. At the same time, he well understood that the aesthetic nature of works of art posed special problems for the "scientific" art historian.

Writing in 1940, Panofsky posed the central question: "How, then, is it possible to build up art history as a respectable scholarly discipline, if its objects come into being by an irrational and subjective process?"[13] Whether one agrees or not with Panofsky's characterization of the artistic process as "irrational and subjectivistic," a study of his early theoretical essays suggests the stakes for the art historian in search of systematicity. Whereas the sensuous experience of aesthetic phenomena can offer merely an aggregate of individual experiences of specific objects, it was thought that a systematic art history could offer reasoned judgment of historical works of art, along with a clear understanding of the system of knowledge to which these objects belonged. Panofsky's early essays address the question, what is art? at the same time as they investigate the possibility of a systematic art history. As he understood, determining fundamental concepts and principles would not only provide the systematicity required for a discipline of art history but also establish the distinctiveness of art history as a historical science.

Chapter 1 opens a central inquiry of this book: what the academic practice of art history will require if it is to achieve scientific respectability. Here I examine Panofsky's approach to aesthetic phenomena in his early theoretical essays, the philosopher Ernst Cassirer's contemporaneous publications on the substance and function of scientific concepts, and Cassirer's essay on Einstein's theory of relativity. For Panofsky and Cassirer, shifts in point of view, and the conjecture of a unified field of inquiry, transform what they refer to as the chaos of sensuous particulars into the

cosmos of a unified system of thought. Opening up the conceptual compass to art and science, I hope to recover the historical and theoretical density of the term "systematicity" and demonstrate its significance for art history around 1915. The conclusion of this chapter inquires into the concept of "style" in art history. As Hans Belting recently put it, "Art history began with the concept of *history* and extended it to the concept of *style*."[14] Conceiving of "style" as art history's primary, and generating, form of relation, I argue that this pivotal concept turns the aesthetic phenomenon into an object of possible knowledge in and for the history of art.

Having establishing the protocols for the transformation from an individual aesthetic phenomenon into an object of systematic knowledge, I turn in chapter 2 to the subject of aesthetic judgment through a rereading of Kantian subjectivity. Since, generally speaking, Kantian philosophy has been reduced in art history to a suite of stock phrases—"the moral law," "the conditions of possibility," "purposiveness without a purpose," "disinterested pleasure"—this chapter aims to recover the full complement of the meaning of these ideas. I focus on the Kantian subject within its initial philosophical and historical contexts. By applying critical pressure to this philosopher's critique and to art history's Kantian inheritance, I hope to demonstrate how the idealized, rational Kantian subject is forever haunted by nature, which is its own unreasonable other.

Ruins offer a provocative site with which to begin a critique of the idealized Kantian subject. Real, sham, and imagined ruins were immensely popular at the end of the eighteenth century, when Kant was formulating his famous critiques. It is striking to note that Kant never discusses the aesthetic experience of ruins in his *Critique of Judgment*, especially since ruins would seem obvious catalysts for the Kantian sublime. Whereas the German poet and essayist Heinrich Heine, who experienced an age of revolution firsthand, understood that "we do not comprehend ruins until we become ruins ourselves," Kant did not engage with the notion of ruins.[15] This chapter strains the Kantian edifice by incorporating the ruin—as emblem and idea—within its framework. By inquiring into the absence of ruins in Kant's critical enterprise, I intend neither to take the philosopher to task for what he did not find fascinating nor to formulate a critique based on his failure to include ruins. My query goes deeper: I investigate how Kant's blindness to the contemporaneous cult of ruins may be emblematic of his own unwillingness to champion a less idealized, or "ruined," subject.

Whereas chapter 2 addresses the subject of aesthetic judgment, chapter 3 considers the symbolic form as orientation. Symbolic forms such as myth, language, religion, art, and knowledge give shape to a world of ex-

perience. The creation of symbolic forms presupposes an orientation to the sensible world or to the world of ideas, while the understanding of the symbolic form requires "a definite, homogenous intellectual orientation."[16] In this chapter I address Warburg's and Cassirer's theories of the symbolic form. While previous scholarship has stressed the differences between Warburg's and Cassirer's theories, I address the commonality between them, drawing attention to the ways Goethe's theory of the polarity of the symbol served as an inspiration for both.[17] Goethe's understanding of the symbolic form as encompassing a "certain totality" and possessing a polar or plural character greatly influenced Cassirer. Cassirer, in turn, inspired Warburg, who also was taken by Goethe's writings.

Goethe's, Warburg's, and Cassirer's conceptions of the oscillating nature of the symbol all allow for the movement from seeing to representing to knowing at the same time as they permit a reverse movement. On the one hand, the symbolic form provides the subject with a means of orientation, a means through which to order perceptual content into form. On the other hand, a theory of the polarity of the symbol brushes against the grain of systematicity, the Kantian paradigm of aesthetic judgment, and the philosophy of history foundational to the discipline of art history, as these are laid out in the first two chapters. Where traditional history writing is predicated on a temporal break with the past, Warburg's understanding of the symbol at once permits and denies the distance between past and present required for the writing of history. I therefore ask: Can Warburg's theory of the symbol be incorporated into a traditional history of art, a history in which accounts of artistic and stylistic development play a pivotal role? This question poses a further query about the power of the symbol in the history of art.

Chapter 4 continues to exert pressure on the transformation of aesthetic phenomena into the cosmos of a systematic, unified field of inquiry by examining Riegl's notion of age value and Benjamin's conceptions of the aura. In the former, natural processes of decay erode the monuments of humankind. Age value, which incorporates time into the aesthetic experience, evokes an emotional response to the life cycle of nature, to the inevitable flow of temporal and historical processes. Age value warns us of what Georg Simmel describes as the "cosmic tragedy" that is our fate mirrored in traces of decay.[18] For his part, Benjamin's well-known definition of the aura as a "strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close it can be" underscores his understanding of the aura as a resistance to the passionate inclination to bring things closer.[19] Age value and the aura, then, turn on an unbridgeable distance and an emotional response.

The age value of a monument works against its preservation as a his-

torical artifact. I argue that subjective experiences of age value and the aura disrupt historical value and official, or voluntary, memory. Experiences of age value and the aura occur when nature makes an appearance on the stage of civilization. What appears is not nature per se but the past in its distance from the present. When this distance erupts, to use Benjamin's words, "into the heart of the present," it transforms the present and alters temporality. Benjamin proposes this destruction as the condition of possibility of authentic experience (*Erfahrung*). Not tied to official commemoration or voluntary memory, aesthetic experiences of age value and the aura, I suggest, function as occasions for individual remembrance (*Erinnerung*). To intervene in history, to counteract the loss of the past as well as the subsuming of the past in the present, Benjamin conceived of a new form of historical perception. The final section of this chapter studies Benjamin's historical method, which he called "the dialectical—the Copernican—turn of remembrance."[20]

Turning to an extended examination of objectivity, my conclusion sheds further light on the book's central conceptual strand of chaos and cosmos. In doing so, it offers a reflection on the general character and basic assumptions of art history, focusing on the figure of the connoisseur. The connoisseur's exercise of reason—construed as exemplary judgment and objectivity in action—has lent to the history of art a certain scientific respectability. While connoisseurship accords rather well with art-historical protocols of objectivity and disciplinarity, it pivots around a single mode of viewing. I argue for objectivity as a more complex affair than the practice of connoisseurship would concede. This hypothesis is easily proved by the conflict of interest at the heart of the Berenson scandal: according to Colin Simpson's 1986 book, *Artful Partners,* Bernard Berenson, the supposedly incorruptible connoisseur, used his inestimable reputation to certify the authenticity of Italian Renaissance paintings of dubious provenance.[21] Using the scandal as a case study, I aim not only to prove my hypothesis but also to tease apart various forms of objectivity—absolute, procedural, disciplinary, and dialectical.[22]

Relating these modes of objectivity to practices of art history past and present, I conclude that aesthetic images are best considered through a dialectical form of objectivity. The aesthetic image requires more than one form of viewing—more, that is, than an "objective" form of aesthetic judgment. It requires two forms of viewing, a simultaneous presence and distance that reverberates from the still point of uncertainty within the subject and the aesthetic object. An indication of these two forms of viewing aesthetic phenomena is present (though obscured) in Kant's conception of an idealized subject as well as in the theories of Warburg, Cassirer, Riegl, and Benjamin. The notion of a still point of uncertainty within the

subject and the object, along with the idea of two forms of viewing, renders both unmediated experience and absolute objectivity impossible. At the same time, these ideas transform the encounter with the image into an experience that includes three elements: the so-called primitive fears and emotions that were the subject of Warburg's investigations, the notion of time itself that Riegl suggested with his concept of age value, and, finally, the intimations of authentic experience and remembrance that Benjamin believed must be included in an expanded compass of aesthetic experience. To say, then, that the work of art ultimately cannot be reduced to knowledge and language does not foreclose the possibility of rigorous investigation and systematicity. Rather, it is to say that aesthetic phenomena will never be fully captured in the net of "scientific" connoisseurship or any other scientifically inspired system.

This book addresses the interplay of chaos and cosmos in history, art history, philosophy, and epistemology, tracing shifts in point of view and transformations of aesthetic objects into historical objects and even into objects of knowledge. Taken together, the chapters relay the manifestations of a practice—and, I would argue, a condition—at the heart of the academic study of art in the early years of the last century in Germany. Along the way, I explore how such thinkers as Warburg, Riegl, and Benjamin grapple with the complexities of aesthetic phenomena and the beholder's relation to the image to offer a way out of the grip of a "scientific" art history. Warburg, Riegl, and Benjamin point toward a practice that is rigorously historical and understands the image as historical in new and deeper ways. Following their lead, this book intimates directions we might take in the academic study of art.

In the afterword I speculate on how we might approach the image in the wake of the lessons taught so elegantly by Panofsky, Kant, Warburg, Cassirer, Riegl, and Benjamin. Traveling the course of seeing, representing, and knowing, the afterword suggests an approach that might allow images to become "knowable" in their inexhaustibility. Whereas the idealized Kantian subject (a subject of reason) aligns quite naturally with a scientific way of knowing, a subject constituted through a still point of uncertainty (a subject, that is to say, conceived through nature and reason) permits an aesthetic way of knowing. Concentrating on the differentiation between elements, a scientific way of knowing sets the subject off from the world; underscoring the relay between beholder and image, an aesthetic way of knowing brings the subject and nature into proximity. I conclude with an exploration of *Stations,* a video installation work of 1994 by Bill Viola. Here, I argue, Viola presents the subject in nature and the subject as nature.

Aesthetic phenomena make no claim to the unitary "truth" or mean-

ing we might very much want them to possess. Yet, like Thales or Kant staring into the starry heavens, the art historian is fueled by the desire to know the "truth" of the image. An aesthetic way of knowing therefore presupposes both the urge to know—the drive to discover that led Thales into a well—and the impossibility of ever knowing aesthetic phenomena in any ultimate sense. Relying on a dialectical form of objectivity, an aesthetic way of knowing allows for the still point of uncertainty in aesthetic phenomena at the same time as it demonstrates that point of unknowing within ourselves. It is my hope that as the contours of subjectivity expand to encompass the unknowable, the unfathomable aspects of aesthetic phenomena will retain their capacity to arrest us, even as we endeavor to transform chaos into cosmos.

The conceptual and thematic threads of chaos and cosmos weave through the entire book. Every chapter, including the conclusion and the afterword, contains its own argument. The chapters, then, may be read separately; each would be read most fruitfully in conjunction with the texts I address. One of my aims in writing was to uncover the intellectual and cultural richness of the early years of the autonomous discipline of art history in Germany. For this reason I focus on primary texts, often on those which have not been translated into English. I hope, in this way, to introduce English readers to aspects of our field with which they might not be familiar. Studying these ideas in their intellectual, cultural, and disciplinary contexts has amplified my respect for those who have come before, just as it has deepened my regard for the gravity and grace of aesthetic phenomena. Following Panofsky, Kant, Warburg, Cassirer, Riegl, and Benjamin, this book proposes the study of the image as a vital and fertile enterprise.

CHAPTER ONE

# *Points of View in Panofsky's Early Theoretical Essays*

> This love of the diagrammatic, this pleasure taken in an image of the general principle swooping down on the powerless, aimless, feckless particular and gathering it up into the stark clarity of a demonstration of the inner workings of the law, this is the frisson that reflection on the cognitive event produced in the first half of this [twentieth] century.
>
> ROSALIND KRAUSS

Rosalind Krauss describes a general modernist enchantment, a fascination with the diagrammatic, the general principle, and the law. The specific focus of her passage is the critic Clement Greenberg's satisfaction with "Loran's bizarre graphs of Cézanne's pictures" in which "the bodies of Madame Cézanne or of the gardener sitting with folded arms" are "drained of everything but a set of their now brutishly definitive silhouettes, traced for them by Loran's own hand, each element notched in turn into the overall diagram of the picture plotted by means of the same myopic contour" (see fig. 1). Greenberg, in 1945, was not bothered by Loran's "presentation of the work stripped bare," of the "bluntness" or "bloodlessness" of his demonstration. Instead, Krauss contends, for Greenberg "these diagrams constituted simply a series of images of the logical moment, that instance of coalescence—which happens in no time at all—of a separate set of facts into a virtual unity."[1]

In the first decades of the last century, particularly in Germany and Austria, the field of art history was coalescing into a "scientific," or systematic, discipline (*Kunstwissenschaft*).[2] Scientific art history was preoccupied with logical order and unity—those masterstrokes of methodological legerdemain capable of turning unwieldy, "irrational" works of art into "knowable" objects of systematic analysis. Like Loran's diagrams

1. Erle Loran, diagram, ca. 1963. From Loran, *Cézanne's Compositions: Analysis of His Form, With Diagrams and Photographs of his Motifs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963). Reproduced by permission of the Regents of the University of California.

and Greenberg's satisfaction with them, Erwin Panofsky's (1892–1968) early theoretical essays aim for "the logical moment"—the moment when aesthetic phenomena are arrested and arrayed in a unified field of inquiry. In this sense, Panofsky's early essays move to the rhythms of disciplinarity. As John Michael Krois reminds us, every "field of study, no matter how particular its objects, aims to relate particular occurrences to a general form or structure."[3] Indeed, the articulation of a discipline rests on its forms of relation: the more unified and logical the forms of relation, the more coherent the field of study.

In his essay of 1915, "The Problem of Style in the Visual Arts" ("Das Problem des Stils in der bildenden Kunst"), Panofsky informs us that art "is not only based on a particular perception of the world [*Anschauung der Welt*] but also on a particular worldview [*Weltanschauung*]."[4] Here the author parlays the connotations of "*Anschauung*" into a subtle demonstration. Variously defined as "view," "experience," "perception," "idea," and "concept," the German word traps within its linguistic net the interplay between seeing and meaning that forms the basis of Panofsky's definition of art. Art, according to Panofsky, is based on perception and the intellectual views and postulates we bring to it. The same might be said of art history, and it should come as no surprise that Panofsky writes from the point of view of the art historian. After all, negotiating the interplay between seeing and meaning, art and history, with the aim of establishing a systematic discipline was something Panofsky shared with other practitioners of early twentieth-century German art history.[5] Writing in 1910, the philosopher Ernst Cassirer described the highest criterion of science as "unity and completeness in the systematic construction of experience."[6] In the early years of the twentieth century, "scientific" art history oriented itself toward this very standard.

Like Cassirer's contemporaneous investigations in the philosophy of science, Panofsky's desire to determine the underlying concepts and principles of art history was in step with the neo-Kantian turn in German philosophy.[7] The neo-Kantian movement arose in reaction to the supposed theoretical deficiencies of Hegelian speculation. In its attempt "to grasp all of human knowledge in one swoop, in a total system from the top down," Hegelian philosophy had left "the specific bases of knowledge unexamined."[8] Returning to Kant was to return to a method of critical inquiry most suitable for the determination of the bases of knowledge of the academic disciplines. Abandoning grand, Hegelian-inspired speculations on the movement of spirit or culture over time, the theorist's turn to Kant was, in the field of art history, also a turn toward the work of art. Inspired by Kant's critical method, Panofsky's early essays theorize the possibility of a priori concepts and principles for art history, those con-

cepts that would account for the nature of art itself and those principles that would orient artistic phenomena within a unified conceptual field. In doing so, these essays address the question, what is art? at the same time as they investigate the possibility of a systematic art history. Determining fundamental concepts and principles would not only provide the systematicity required for a discipline of art history but would also establish the distinctiveness of art history as a historical science.[9]

The "scientific revolution" in German art history aimed to move beyond the consideration of art as merely an aesthetic phenomenon. As Edgar Wind remarked in 1924, the trouble with the aesthetic phenomenon is that it "has no other meaning than its own. It is isolated, it is indivisible, and it is self-sufficient." Consequently, "it can be neither wrong nor right. It is simply *there.*"[10] Rather than subjecting the aesthetic phenomenon to a systematic inquiry, the aesthetic point of view offered an individual judgment of taste, a love of beauty for its own sake rather than any understanding of the conditions of the appearance of historical beauty. In this way, the aesthetic point of view enabled aesthetic phenomena to remain "isolated" and "self-sufficient"—"simply *there.*"[11]

If the sensuous experience of aesthetic phenomena offered merely an aggregate of individual experiences of specific objects, it was thought that a systematic art history could offer reasoned judgment of historical works of art along with a clear understanding of the system of knowledge to which these objects belonged. Put differently, systematic art history sought to transform the chaos of aesthetic phenomena into the cosmos of a unified disciplinary structure. Panofsky recognized that the work of art "always *has* aesthetic significance," and he believed that attentive looking should lead to an engagement with art-historical problems.[12] Formulating his art history alongside advocates of empathy theory and psychological aesthetics, he was keen to ward off the incursions of "modern aesthetics" into scientific art history.[13] Correlating aesthetic phenomena with a system of historical sequence was one thing, adequately describing the nature of art was another. Aesthetic phenomena, in other words, offered special challenges for art history, as Panofsky discovered when he sought to provide the "inherent laws" and to preserve the "unique value" of "the academic study of art."[14]

In "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," an essay of 1940, Panofsky asks the central question: How, then, is it possible to build up art history as a respectable scholarly discipline, if its objects come into being by an irrational and subjective process? While works of art are clearly distinct from the objects of scientific investigation, both the humanist and the scientist rely on theory, or hypothesis, to conjecture a "system that makes sense" for their respective objects. Hence, "what is true of the re-

lationship between monuments, documents and a general historical concept in the humanities is evidently equally true of the relationship between phenomena, instruments and theory in the natural sciences." "To grasp reality," Panofsky continues, "we have to detach ourselves from the present. Philosophy and mathematics do this by building systems in a medium that is by definition not subject to time. Natural science and the humanities do it by creating those spatio-temporal structures which I have called the 'cosmos of nature' and the 'cosmos of culture.'"[15]

In a speech delivered in 1945 to the Institute for Advanced Study, Panofsky comments further on the intersections between the humanist and the scientist:

> There are, after all, problems so general that they affect *all* human efforts to transform chaos into cosmos, however much these efforts may differ in subject matter. The humanist, too, finds himself faced—once he attempts to *think* about what he is doing—with such questions as: the changing significance of spatial and temporal data within different frames of reference; the delicate relationship between the phenomenon and the "instrument" (which, in the case of the humanist, is represented by the "document"); the continuous and/or discontinuous structure of the processes which we lightheartedly call "historical evolution."[16]

The stations of Panofsky's art-historical methodology demonstrate his *thinking* about what he was doing: "the changing significance of spatial and temporal data within different frames of reference" is studied in his 1927 *Perspective as Symbolic Form;*[17] "the delicate relationship between the phenomenon and . . . the 'document'" finds its fullest articulation in the iconographic method; finally, "the structure of the processes" that enable "historical evolution" might be suggested in the underlying laws of the discipline of art history itself. The search for such intrinsic principles animates Panofsky's early theoretical essays.

Turning from the strict observation of nature or culture toward speculation on their objects of study, the scientist and the humanist transcend their separate scholarly domains and join on a common plane of thought. This shift from the empirical to the objective point of view also marks the arrival of theory—what Panofsky describes as the thinking about what one is doing. Theory enables the scientist and the humanist to consider the object within a more speculative frame of reference; theory facilitates the creation and activation of fields of inquiry. Art history is theoretical in a double sense: first, after close observation and thoughtful study the art historian must interpret aesthetic objects that do not subscribe to natural laws; second, transforming an aggregate of aesthetic phenomena into a

scholarly discipline requires a theoretical point of view onto the field of the visual arts.

Art history is a curious discipline. Consisting of a domain of aesthetic objects, art history requires the close observation and study of images that by their very nature can never be "known" in the objective sense toward which science strives, as well as the classification of these objects into categories and contexts that—structurally speaking—resemble those of the natural sciences.[18] If the goal of the sciences is knowledge, then, as Panofsky rightly states, that of the humanities must be wisdom.[19] Conceding knowledge to science does not leave art history in the lurch of relativism, however. The methods employed by the art historian guide research toward reasonable ends. In this way, art history can be built up "as a respectable scholarly discipline" though "its very objects come into being by an irrational, subjective process."[20]

How does an ultimately unknowable aesthetic phenomenon become an object of disciplinary knowledge? In what follows I reflect on points of view in art history, on what enables the turn from chaos to cosmos. To this end I will consider seeing, representing, and knowing. Each term of this triad can be correlated with a point of view: the term "seeing" describes the perception of an object, or the empirical point of view; "representing" implies the shift from the perception of an object to *Anschauung,* the mental image or representation of the perceptible object, and, correspondingly, an objective viewpoint;[21] finally, "knowing" refers to the epistemological or transcendental vantage point, wherein one moves beyond the mental representation of an object toward speculation on that object within a broad field of inquiry. Examples of this last point of view include the search for the fundamental laws of perceptual phenomena or the initial classification of these phenomena into schemes and systems.

Encompassing internal and external vantage points within its purview, theory enables the movement from seeing to representing to knowing. As theory ushers our perceptions into thoughts, and finally into knowledge, so does it lead us from sight to insight, from the particular instance to the general category.[22] In this way, the transition from seeing to representing to knowing describes the movement of disciplinarity in the visual arts. *Pace* Panofsky, we might want to consider wisdom rather than knowledge as the appropriate term for the purpose of "the history of art as a humanistic discipline," since art history trades in aesthetic objects. Yet art history is predicated on the transformation of aesthetic phenomena into "knowable" objects, if not objects of knowledge.

Written in the years before Panofsky's own depiction of the aim of scientific method "to transform chaos into cosmos," Cassirer's 1910 study

*Substance and Function* describes the outlines of this pursuit with a similar use of metaphor.

> The aggregate of sensuous things must be related to a system of necessary concepts and laws, and brought to unity in this relation. This process of thought, however, demands really more than the mere combination and transformation of parts and presentations; it presupposes an independent and constructive activity, as is most clearly manifest in the creation of limiting structures. The "empiricist" also must accept this form of idealization; for, without it, the world of perception would not be merely a mosaic but a true chaos.[23]

Likening the data of sense perception to an "aggregate of sensuous things," Cassirer explains how the move from aggregate to system necessitates an "active process" that "transports what is given into a new logical sphere."[24]

As one shuttles between the empirical, the objective, and the transcendental points of view in this "active process," fixed properties are replaced by the "intellectual abbreviations" of empirical or hypothetical concepts. Concepts, Cassirer explains, do not "copy" "a given manifold abstractly and schematically." Instead, and more powerfully, concepts constitute a new "law of relation" and thus produce "a new and unique connection of the manifold."[25] Empirical concepts gather sensuous particulars into serial relations by permitting one to find uniformity in the aggregate of sensuous experience; hypothetical concepts, in turn, allow one to conjecture necessary connections within logical systems. Whereas empirical concepts are forms of representation of the world of sensuous experience, hypothetical concepts mark the flight into the realm of pure speculation. In hypothesis, a whole is substituted for the part—fixed properties are replaced by concepts or universal principles in an "active process" that necessitates the negotiation of two points of view. As in the story of Thales, Cassirer makes clear in his elegant study that a vantage point on the concrete *and* the abstract is necessary for the building up of scientific knowledge.[26]

If concepts provide the mechanism necessary for transforming sensuous particulars into unchanging objects of experience, judgment motivates the transformation from seeing to representing to knowing by ordering aesthetic phenomena under the empirical, the objective, and the transcendental points of view. Moving from the empirical to the objective point of view, judgment provides the organizing concepts that connect individual objects into serial relations. The transcendental vantage point of judgment allows one to move beyond the object and hypothesize about the meaning and correlation of objects in a unified field of inquiry. Fol-

lowing Kant, Cassirer describes how judgment brings knowledge into a unitary system of relations of superordination and subordination. Under a standpoint of judgment, Cassirer explains, "the limited circle of facts, that is sensuously accessible, expands before our intellectual vision into a universal connection of phenomena according to natural law."[27] Here Cassirer intimates the frontiers of objectivity, that imagined sphere characterized by a universal order permitting exact reconstruction from any particular point of view. While the "noble dream" of such rigorous objectivity is well a thing of the past, it is nevertheless important to underscore two things.[28]

First, the transformation of what Cassirer and Panofsky refer to as the chaos of sensuous particulars into the cosmos of a system of thought begins with the conjecture of a unified system to which such elements belong. The imagining of a unified system serves as a Kantian "regulative idea," an idea we must assume in order to facilitate our understanding of objects in the first place.[29] Serving as an imaginary focus, the hypothetical idea of unity not only establishes the continuity of experience, it also guides the process of inquiry from immediate experience to reflection, from consciousness of uniformity to consciousness of necessary connection. Motivating the shift in point of view, judgment creates a meaningful set of propositions which are then tested.[30] What Cassirer describes as the highest criterion of science, namely "unity and completeness in the systematic construction of experience," is achieved when universal premises are determined. When these universal concepts, principles, or laws are established, then all propositions resolve themselves into pure correlations within a unified field of inquiry. The goal of investigation is therefore not the gathering of a quantity of sensuous particulars or empirical observations, but the quality of the connection made through judgment, the limit of which would be that imagined frontier of objectivity where an individual judgment could be deemed universal.

Second, as one moves toward the use of intellectual hypotheses, the object of analysis does not change. Rather, what shifts is one's vantage point relative to the object.[31] Divergent points of view on an object enable a plurality of different forms of expression that nonetheless have the object as their initial frame of reference. It is worth remarking that when Cassirer and Panofsky were writing, the natural sciences had rejected the Newtonian belief in absolute space and time in favor of the understanding of a space-time continuum. Einstein's paper on the special theory of relativity, published in 1905, marked the transition from the belief in an absolute system of coordinates to the understanding of the relative relation of space and time.[32] Granting the importance of such scientific discoveries, we may note the inherent reason why this shift in viewpoint

is inevitable: because the content of consciousness always comes to us shaped or arranged in some manner, it is impossible to separate completely the processes of perception and thought.[33] As Kant had remarked in his first *Critique,* the productive imagination is an ingredient of every possible perception. Indeed, a mutual relation exists between perceptual "facts" and one's thinking about them, a state of affairs felicitously described by Goethe in his well-known maxim "Every fact is already theory."[34] Panofsky cites Goethe's maxim in his 1915 book on Dürer's art theory.[35]

If, as Panofsky and Wind suggest, the stubborn particularity of aesthetic phenomena presents special challenges for art history, aesthetic phenomena are nonetheless the starting points of investigation for systematic art history. This is not the case merely because works of art are the objects of art history. As the subject of art history, works of art are the starting points of theoretical investigation. To be sure, the subjective, objective, and transcendental viewpoints place the objects of experience into different logical spheres. A fundamental relation exists between these points of view, however: although each point of view is distinct, as Kant and Goethe suggest, they are also interrelated. Paraphrasing Kant's famous phrase, Panofsky notes how "without objects, art-theoretical concepts are empty; without concepts, art-historical objects are blind."[36] Like the scientific experiment, the investigation of what Panofsky terms "artistic problems" is an inherently circular process involving the object and one's thinking about it.

As Panofsky indicates, scientific art history requires two points of view: a view of the object and a vantage point beyond the object. In his 1920 essay "The Concept of Artistic Volition" ("Das Begriff des Kunstwollens"), the author commences by addressing the particularity of art history, as well as the need for a theoretical point of view on the field of investigation.

> It is the curse and the blessing of the academic study of art [*Kunstwissenschaft*] that its objects necessarily demand consideration from other than a purely historical point of view. A purely historical study, whether it proceeds from the history of form or the history of content, never explains the work of art as a phenomenon except in terms of other phenomena. Historical study does not draw on a higher source of perception: to explain the artistic production of a particular artist within the framework of his time (or in light of his individual artistic character), it traces a particular representation iconographically, or a particular formal complex according to a history of types, or even tries to determine if such a complex is derived from any particular influence at all. This means that each real phenomenon to be investigated is referred to all the others within the whole complex: their ab-

> solute locus and significance is not determined by a fixed Archimedean point outside their essential nature. Even the longest "developmental series" represents only lines which must have their starting and finishing points within such a purely historical nexus. . . .
>
> Artistic activity, however, distinguishes itself from general historical activity (and in this sense is like perception) in that its productions represent not the expressions of subjects but the informing of materials, not the given events but the results. Thus in considering art we are faced with the demand (which in the field of philosophy is satisfied by epistemology) for a principle of explanation by which the artistic phenomenon can be recognized not only by ever further references to other phenomena within its historical sphere but also by a consciousness which penetrates the sphere of its empirical existence.[37]

The transformation of the object from aesthetic phenomenon to historical work of art requires one to connect images with their history. As Panofsky indicates, relating these historical objects to each other is then a matter of finding the uniformities among them and of forming classes or types of objects based on certain common attributes—a process generally known as finding the category and "style" of the work of art. Thus related, heterogeneous objects become homogeneous series of objects organized according to certain sets of structural relations. Panofsky makes clear, however, that this procedure only goes so far. The "demand . . . for a principle of explanation by which the artistic phenomenon can be recognized . . . by a consciousness which penetrates the sphere of its empirical existence" implies the new point of view required for the correlation of artistic phenomena into a systematic art history. This move away from mere seeing toward the abstraction of the object necessary for scientific knowledge arises from the desire to reduce the structural relations binding works of art together to a more fundamental "principle of explanation" that would determine the whole sphere of aesthetic phenomena from a transcendental, rather than an empirical or objective vantage point.

Noting the "curse and blessing of the academic study of art," Panofsky therefore demands that we seek to answer two questions simultaneously: what is art? and what are the conditions of a systematic art history? Examining the nature of the foundations of recent art history, in particular the methods put forth by Wölfflin and Riegl, Panofsky's early theoretical essays ponder the conditions of possibility of a scientific art history. In what ways does art history account for the empirical, the objective, and the transcendental points of view within a unified field of inquiry? I will argue that Panofsky's early essays engage seeing, representing, and knowing by demonstrating how a theory of style might compose perception, representation in the form of a work of art, and historical

knowledge in the guise of a history of style. In this way, Panofsky's theory of style accounts for the empirical, the objective, and the transcendental points of view just as it reveals something of the underlying principles comprising and correlating a systematic art history.

## Chaos, Cosmos, and Correlation

Published in 1915, Panofsky's "The Problem of Style in the Visual Arts" responds to Heinrich Wölfflin's (1864–1945) December 1911 lecture to the Prussian Academy of Sciences.[38] Panofsky begins his essay by registering an inconsistency at the heart of Wölfflin's own system: "Every style," so Wölfflin begins, "doubtless has a particular expressive content; in the style of the Gothic or the Italian Renaissance are reflected a mood of the time and a way of life, and in the lines of Raphael there appear his personal characteristics." For Wölfflin, then, "the essence of style" consists in "not only what is said but how it is said." Curiously enough, however, as Wölfflin moves from the consideration of individual works of art to the art of a historical period, expression recedes in value. That "every artist of the sixteenth century, be he Raphael or Dürer, employs line rather than the painterly mark as the essential means of expression no longer depends on what one could call mentality, spirit, temperament or mood," Wölfflin asserts, but rather "on a general form of seeing and representation" that may be "interpreted solely as visual possibilities." Wölfflin, then, distinguishes two different roots of style: an "expressive, interpretative capacity for meaningful content" on the one hand, and a "psychologically meaningless form of seeing" on the other.[39] Because style is here based on a "double root," the concepts and categories of Wölfflin's entire system are themselves divided into "two fundamentally different groups," not the least of which is the separation of form and content.[40]

Can "form" be defined merely as a general concept of representation, and so be categorically distinguished from the expressive content of particular representational forms, as Wölfflin implies in his double root of style?[41] Is the eye merely an organic, unpsychological instrument, as Wölfflin claims? Can we fundamentally separate the relation of the eye and the world from the relation of the psyche (*Seele*) and the world?[42] As they stand, Wölfflin's categories merely describe the style of an artist or historical period; they do not explain why a work of art has style in the first place. Whereas Wölfflin's five conceptual pairs describe *how* Renaissance and Baroque paintings are composed, and provide us with a formal vocabulary with which to describe these images, Panofsky's 1915 essay seeks to explain *why* representation is expressive.

Under the guise of taking Wölfflin to task for his double root of style, Panofsky charts a correlation between seeing and meaning on the one hand and form and content on the other hand. For Panofsky, the cluster of concepts that denote seeing—the act of seeing, the eye, and the optical—remain mechanistic and empty of connotation when these are understood only literally.[43] Endeavoring to provide seeing, the eye, and the optical with figurative meaning, which is to say with the capacity for expression, Panofsky stresses the role of the psyche (*Seele*). Understood variously as the site of feeling, temperament, and turn of mind, the *Seele* lends expressive content to what the eye sees, as it organizes what is seen into meaningful content. In this sense, *Seele* is considered a priori: the psyche is not inherent in any given content but presupposed as a method of ordering contents. Stressing the inner dimension that provides the "empty container" of the eye with the capacity for content and individual expression, Panofsky demonstrates the combined role of representation and expression in perceptual experience.

According to Panofsky, then, style does not have two independent roots but "one root with two stems."[44] The root of style is that art is itself a shaping of materials. Hence, a will to form or expression is the fundamental principle of style. This fundamental principle serves to distinguish the academic study of art from the other disciplines. Style has two stems because general forms of representation and individual expressive content interact in the shaping of materials. If style is dependent on the interaction of the general and the particular, then this interaction implies the negotiation of two points of view. Instead of conceiving form and content as two separate, irreducible concepts, Panofsky sets general form and content in a dialectical relation mediated by the psyche (*Seele*).[45] This dialectic, moreover, both explains and creates the problem of style: if an understanding of the interaction of the eye and *Seele* is essential to activate the category of style and to provide it with conceptual value, then this very interaction is responsible for the multiplicity and heterogeneity of individual forms. Artists, Panofsky contends, work within and shape general stylistic categories: artists choose between linear and painterly just as they paint in a style that might be characterized as linear or painterly.[46] As a consequence, perception, expression, and representation must be joined in the concept of style just as they are joined in the creation of a work of art. Unlike Wölfflin, then, for Panofsky a single work of art and the art of a period are allied as manifestations of an a priori will to form and expression.[47]

If the dialectical interaction of general categories of representation and individual expressive content make for seemingly endless resolutions to what Panofsky terms "artistic problems," it is important to un-

derscore how general categories serve our understanding of style in the first place. Employing a musical analogy, Panofsky notes that it is precisely because all fugues are fugues that each can exhibit such varied individual expression; conversely, one can distinguish a passage in a sonata movement only because it is a sonata, with the result that even if it were possible for this passage to reach the greatest possible resemblance in theme, tempo, and modulation to that of a fugue, these two could never be absolutely identical.[48] Particular forms gain meaning only in relation to general forms or categories, since it is the mapping of the general that allows the historian of art or music to understand the refinements of, and variations in, a specific form. The composition of Panofsky's 1915 essay is itself musical in form. Its theme is the problem of style, and the variations on this theme are the dialectical relations between the individual psyche and the world, on the one hand, and the will to expression and the general forms of representation, on the other. As in his musical examples, Panofsky provides a demonstration of how two images with the same form have different content, just as two images with different content have the same form—an epistemological condition beautifully articulated later, incidentally, in Jorge Luis Borges's story of "Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote."[49]

Here we might note how the dialectical interaction of general and particular that gives us the category of style is itself based on comparison: it is only by reference to a general category that we might be able to recognize a new passage of music or a new work of art; likewise, it is only because musical passages and artworks relate to a general category that we are able to appreciate such fine distinctions among them. Taking this a bit further, it becomes apparent that an entirely unique object would remain stranded outside the classificatory system of art history unless this object were made "knowable" through a process of comparison with what is known.[50] While artistic phenomena are prized for their originality, it is useful to consider how, in terms of a *history* of art, originality itself is subjected to the "limiting structure" of general stylistic categories. Wölfflin's own use of the "comparative method" in his *Fundamental Principles of Art History* has been rightly criticized.[51] It is nonetheless worth noting that if style is a basic principle—and a distinguishing feature—of the academic study of art, then it is not without coincidence that the comparative method would itself be a fundamental feature of the history of art.[52] On this account, dual slide projection could be considered as art history's complementary technological protocol.[53]

Correlating the empirical and the objective points of view in a single principle of style, Panofsky accounts for the possibility of form and meaning just as he demonstrates how form and content come together in the

expression of meaning. If, like Wölfflin, one considers seeing, the eye, and the optical too literally, they remain colorless concepts—analogous to the "empty container of the eye" in Panofsky's essay. Like the dialectical relation between the eye and the psyche, Wölfflin's general categories obtain their full value only when they are set in a dynamic relation with particular, actual forms. While Panofsky sets the general and the particular in dialectical relation, he nevertheless distinguishes the general from the particular. Whereas Wölfflin relates works of art to a category of style such as linear or painterly, Panofsky correlates the style of the work of art to the fundamental principle of style itself, and, in doing so, to the epistemological bases of art history. In this way, specific works of art "can be ordered into a system of categories" which themselves are based on a general "possibility of representation."[54]

Operating "like an epistemologist," Panofsky is here "not concerned with the empirical subject," understood as either the artist or the viewing subject, but with "art itself," and more precisely, with "what is harbored within the work of art."[55] Like Wölfflin, Panofsky trains his sights on the work rather than on the maker. Unlike Wölfflin, however, whom he criticizes for defining seeing, the eye, and the optical too literally, Panofsky finds the traces of the maker in the work—the psyche, after all, lends individual temperament and feeling to the organ of the eye. And yet, what Panofsky terms the psyche in the 1915 essay is considered more an a priori principle than an individual expressive element per se. Though Panofsky binds style to a single a priori principle, he is, in other words, not as interested in the composition of *Seele* so much as in how it operates. In this way he neatly avoids the thorny task of defining messy terms like temperament or feeling. Instead, he focuses on the apparently more important task of delineating the conceptual value of a unitary principle of style.

Operating "like an epistemologist," moreover, Panofsky can assume the role of interpreter, discovering meaning otherwise lost on those whose gaze lies too near—spatially or temporally—to the object of study. From this vantage point he is able to regard what lies within the object: "an involuntary gesture, without a trace of expressive intention, can be eminently expressive," he suggests in a footnote.[56] What remains in germ, expressed as it is in a footnote to the 1915 essay, is a prolepsis—the trace of a future, iconographic method. Forms, traces, clues: Panofsky's search for meaning in an image has been likened to the practice of the medical doctor and the sleuth.[57] Yet it is precisely in validating the role of the present-day interpreter over the artist's own interpretations of his or her work, or the reactions to this work by the artist's contemporaries, that Panofsky hopes to determine the fundamental concepts of a system-

atic art history. Still, Panofsky presumes the a priori nature of his most important critical term, *Seele,* just as he fails to determine this term critically—so much, we might say, for the moves of the epistemologist.

Notwithstanding his criticisms, Panofsky praises Wölfflin for providing art history with general categories such as linear, painterly, and so forth. The "first task of art history must be the discovery, elaboration, and refinement of these categories," he argues, for only in this way can art history achieve systematicity and disciplinary coherence.[58] Although he succeeds in offering an accounting of Wölfflin's five conceptual pairs, Panofsky concludes by saying that a complete explanation is not possible since the causality of Wölfflin's categories cannot be determined. Yet even if "it is not possible for scientific knowledge to delineate the historical and psychological causes of the general forms of artistic representation" (a task, it would seem, best suited for the interpretations of the art historian), binding Wölfflin's style into a single root enables Panofsky to correlate concepts of form and content, representation and expression, and with them the stylistic categories, into one unified system.

Panofsky contends that it is Alois Riegl (1858–1905) "who has come furthest in the creation and use" of such fundamental concepts.[59] In "The Concept of Artistic Volition," an essay of 1920, the author suggests that Riegl's concept of artistic volition, the *Kunstwollen,* which encompasses both a will to form and the expressive features of the artwork itself, may account for immanent meaning and the history of that meaning as this is expressed in works of art.[60] As his 1915 essay on Wölfflin sought to correlate form and content, so here Panofsky understands "formal and imitative elements as different manifestations of a common fundamental tendency."[61] Acknowledging that an understanding of the *Kunstwollen* can easily slide into "psychological volition," and into the "equally common and parallel concept of 'artistic intention,'" Panofsky is keen to secure artistic volition as a first principle.[62] He therefore avoids the use of artistic volition in "modern aesthetics," since from this viewpoint we are told more about the "psychology of the beholder making the judgment" than about the work of art itself.[63] He likewise cautions the reader against a consideration of the *Kunstwollen* as the "historically genetic" volition of the artist's time, as this point of view merely describes how works of art are represented in contemporary criticism. Instead, Panofsky focuses on an epistemological investigation of artistic volition, since only such a fundamental understanding of the *Kunstwollen* will permit knowledge of "immanent meaning."[64]

Considering artistic volition as a first principle is a matter of perspective. In order to illustrate this point Panofsky offers a comparison from epistemology: "If I take any judgmental proposition—for example,

the one made famous by Kant's *Prolegomena:* 'the air is elastic'—as given, then I can look at it from many points of view," he writes. Panofsky conveys the substance of the historical, psychological, grammatical, and logical viewpoints of this proposition. He then arrives at the importance of the comparison for his own argument. It is worth quoting at length.

> Finally, I can ask whether an analytical or synthetic judgment, a judgment of experience or a judgment of perception, is expressed in it. In asking this last, transcendental-philosophical question of it, something is revealed that I would call the epistemological essence of the proposition: that which is in it as purely cognitive content apart from its formal logical structure and its psychological prehistory, indeed apart from what the person making the judgment "meant" himself. I can determine that, as it stands, the proposition "the air is elastic" merely contains a judgment in which perceptions are found only in their ordinary relationship, that is, the perceptions are linked only through their simultaneous life in an individual consciousness, not by the pure cognitive concept of causality "in consciousness in general." While I determine this I arrive at the judgment that the proposition first of all does not contain a judgment of experience but merely a judgment of perception. Its validity is that of a statement about the actual nexus of ideas of air and elasticity in the thinking self making the judgment, not that of an objective, universally valid law, according to which the one view necessarily conditions the other. A validity of this latter sort would, on the contrary, only befit the proposition if we had found that, instead of being linked to ties of psychological coexistence, the two ideas (air and elasticity) had been causally linked into a unity of experience.[65]

Drawing on Kant's distinction between judgments of perception, which rest on empirical judgments, and judgments of experience, which require hypothetical judgments, Panofsky reinforces his earlier claim that only an epistemological point of view will reveal the "immanent meaning" of artistic phenomena. In terms of Kant's proposition, Panofsky neatly demonstrates that judgments of perception are at best capable of determining qualities of elasticity and air, and their casual, or historical, relation to each other. While judgments of perception indicate what I can expect based on my experience of perceiving the world, judgments of experience inquire into "consciousness in general," with the aim of discovering the conditions of possibility of cognition itself. A judgment of experience of this same proposition would therefore demonstrate that air and elasticity are related through an "objective, universally valid law," which would render them "causally linked into a unity of experience."

Panofsky turns from epistemology to artistic volition in the next paragraph, in which he attempts to explain how we might relate artistic volition to a systematic art history.

> Let us now return to the question of the comprehension of artistic intention or volition. Just as a particular epistemological essence belonged to the proposition "the air is elastic" when it was considered in the light of causality (and only thus), so an immanent meaning can be discovered in the objects of aesthetics in more widely or more narrowly, epochally, regionally, or individually limited artistic phenomena. Thus artistic volition is no longer revealed in only a psychological but also in a transcendental/philosophical sense. This is so if these objects are considered not in relationship to something outside themselves (historical circumstances, psychological prehistory, stylistic analogies) but exclusively in relation to their own being. They must be considered again, however, in the light of standards of determination that, with the force of a priori basic principles, refer not to the phenomenon itself but to the conditions of its existence and it being "thus."[66]

Comprehending a work of art under a number of possible concepts, such as time, place, or artist, judgments of perception help us recognize the work of art as belonging to a particular time, region, or artist's *oeuvre.* Helpful as this might be for the building up of stylistic categories and the understanding of historical periods, these judgments are made by relating the work to something outside its "essential nature." A judgment of experience of artistic volition, in contrast, would demonstrate the innermost sense of the work of art. As Panofsky suggests, determining the a priori principles of artistic volition not only necessitates our answering the question, what is art? but also "the condition of its existence and its being 'thus.'"

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant claimed space and time as forms of pure intuition (*reine Anschauung*), that is to say, as a priori preconditions of experience. Panofsky, through his own admission, does not have a ready answer for what might be analogous forms for artistic volition. As preconditions for cognition, Kantian categories of space and time render causality possible. In terms of art history, categories of space and time serve to locate objects within a stream of time rather than account for causality per se. As Panofsky indicates, we must assume the possibility of comprehending the artistic phenomenon "as a unity" in order to carry out our investigation of it from an epistemological point of view.[67] Yet even in presupposing this much, we cannot critically determine causality for artistic phenomena. Whereas what Panofsky calls a psychological or historically genetic view of artistic volition might lead us to conjecture psychological or historical "causes" for the sensuous appearance of works of art, these judgments can never determine artistic volition in its innermost sense. Yet if scientific art history is predicated on establishing

the a priori principles of works of art, and on correlating these with a system of categories, then where are we left?

Instead of continuing with his epistemological analysis, Panofsky concludes his 1920 essay by reintroducing the necessity of documents as "heuristic aids for an interpretation of meaning." As "heuristic aids," documents serve to correct false suppositions regarding the meaning of a work of art. In this way, they lead the art historian increasingly closer to valid interpretations of meaning. Documents, Panofsky writes, are not then "an immediate indication of the meaning itself; yet they are the source of those insights without which the grasp of meaning is, often enough, impossible."[68] Panofsky's turn toward an analysis of documents marks a shift in his essay from the consideration of immanent meaning to one of "phenomenal understanding."[69] As such, this shift likewise marks a turn from a discussion of the meaning of artistic volition per se to the meaning of a work of art.[70] Although Panofsky does not determine artistic volition from an epistemological point of view in the 1920 essay, he nevertheless succeeds in distinguishing artistic volition from "both the artist's volition and the volition of his time," and in demonstrating what would be necessary in order to secure artistic volition as a fundamental concept.

Employing the concept of the *Kunstwollen* as a theoretical instrument, Panofsky demonstrates how an epistemological point of view opens up the deepest level of meaning in the work of art. To ask the "philosophical-transcendental question" of Riegl's *Kunstwollen,* he suggests, is to consider the concept in a way not possible for Riegl himself on account of his own historical position.[71] Panofsky's consideration of the *Kunstwollen* against the grain is nonetheless in keeping with the earlier art historian's own definition: for Riegl, too, the concept of artistic volition encompasses the sphere of the metaphysical and the historical particular. Yet unlike Riegl, who emphasizes both points of view in his definition and application of the *Kunstwollen,* Panofsky stresses the "philosophical-transcendental" connotations of Riegl's concept.[72] By taking the *Kunstwollen* as an a priori principle, Panofsky correlates Riegl's metaphysical and historical senses of the concept into one unitary sense or "immanent meaning." In this way he shows us how we might arrive at a principle of artistic volition that precedes the particular "stylistic qualities" or "modes of representation" in works of art themselves. In keeping with his earlier essay on Wölfflin, Panofsky does not define the substance of the *Kunstwollen.* Instead, he "secures the concept of artistic volition in a purely critical manner" by offering a critically undefined concept of artistic volition to art history as its own fundamental concept.[73]

In the 1925 essay, "On the Relation of Art History to Art Theory," which bears the subtitle "A Contribution to the Discussion of the Possibility of 'Fundamental Concepts for Systematic Art History'" ("Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie. Ein Beitrag zu der Erörterung über die Möglichkeit 'kunstwissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe'"), Panofsky offers a more detailed accounting of how a principle of style operates in art history, art theory, and systematic art history (*Kunstwissenschaft*).[74] Making a careful distinction for the first time between the activities of atheoretical and theoretical art history, the author ventures a critical articulation of the deepest level of meaning of aesthetic phenomena. Not surprisingly, this fundamental level is correlated in his schema with "a unitary principle of style," and so with the register of disciplinary coherence.

In his earlier writings Panofsky aimed to correlate form and content into a unitary principle of style and to secure Riegl's concept of artistic volition as a fundamental concept. In this most recent essay he extends his earlier investigations by formulating them into a unified system. In the 1925 essay, Panofsky therefore translates Riegl's concept of artistic volition into a will to form (*Formwillen),* which is likewise referred to as a principle of style (*Stilprinzip*). As in his critique of Wölfflin, so here Panofsky defines a principle of style as the necessary interaction and "balance of two opposing principles." Whereas Wölfflin's stylistic categories merely account for the visual solutions of artistic problems, in this essay Panofsky presents the originary impetus for the problem of form and style.[75] By accounting for the problem of style, however, Panofsky does not merely extend his earlier critique of Wölfflin. Defining a fundamental principle of style that allows for seemingly infinite possibilities of artistic form and content, Panofsky also implies that this manifold of artistic possibility might be inappropriately constricted by Wölfflin's stylistic categories.

Shortly into the essay Panofsky presents the accompanying table of the conceptual system of scientific art history.[76] Instead of critically "deducing this table and showing its completeness and use value from a methodological point of view," Panofsky seeks more modestly to demonstrate how the characteristic artistic problems presented in visual and architectural creations are structurally related to the fundamental concepts of a systematic art history. Because different logical categories are unified by the author under the same system of explanation, the "facts" of art are neither stranded nor inert; instead, they become values in a system of relations. As we shall see, Panofsky presents a "cosmos of culture" as different but complementary points of view for considering the same phenomenon.[77]

| Universal antithesis within the ontological sphere | Specific oppositions within the phenomenal, that is, visual sphere | | | Universal antithesis within the methodological sphere |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1. Opposition of the elementary values | 2. Opposition of values of figuration | 3. Opposition of compositional values | |
| "Fullness" is opposed to "form." | "Optical" values (open space) are opposed to "haptic" values (bodies). | "Values of depth" are opposed to "surface values." | Values of "in one another" (merging) are opposed to values of "next to one another" (division). | "Time" is opposed to "space." |

The table indicates how Panofsky grounds art history on first principles by discovering a transcendental category—a will to form, a principle of style—that is also perceptible in the work of art. Characterizing the "universal antithesis within the ontological sphere," at the far left, as the "living exchange" of fullness and form, Panofsky provides a motor for the "great ur-problem of art":[78] if art fulfills its specific task in the creation of sensuous form, then a resolution of the perpetual antithesis of "fullness and form" is the impetus for the creation of artistic phenomena.[79] As the condition of possibility of the work of art, the antithesis of "fullness and form" is conceived as the a priori substrate, or theoretical grounding principle, of artistic phenomena. In the "universal antithesis within the methodological sphere," at the far right, we find "time opposed to space" (or, literally, time standing in opposition to space), categories borrowed from Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason.* For Panofsky, too, space and time are defined as a priori, hypothetical concepts. Yet where Kant demonstrates that categories of space and time are the condition of possibility of cognition and causality, Panofsky relates these categories to the work of art itself: precisely because every artistic phenomenon is a work of art, he suggests, it has a time and space of creation.[80] While "the ontological sphere" of Panofsky's table therefore indicates how art originates as a "shaping process" of "relative" form and "absolute" fullness,[81] "the methodological sphere" defines the antithesis of time and space as the condition for the solution of artistic problems. As a priori concepts, fullness, form, time, and space are correlated in Panofsky's system.[82] Consequently, the ontological and methodological spheres are themselves bound together by analogy, with the result that the universal antithesis of fullness and form "can also be spoken of as the principle of a systematic art history."[83] As the outer registers of the table fold in on themselves, Panofsky unwittingly demonstrates how his own explanation is caught within the hermeneutic circle of that which it seeks to explain.

Moving to the middle columns of the table, we see that this fundamental "living exchange" is given characteristic visual form through the various oppositions described. In column 1 we find Riegl's optical and haptic values, the opposition of which produces figure and ground relations. Column 2 offers Wölfflin's binaries of plane and recession, which serve to connect visual elements. Finally, column 3 registers the opposing compositional values of merging and division in which the "highest region of the visual gathers the work into a high level of unity." The three characteristic artistic problems of isolation, connection, and unity indicated in the middle columns of the table are themselves conceived as the representational results of the originary opposition of fullness and form registered in the ontological sphere. In correlating the ontological and visual spheres, Panofsky is careful to note the difference between them, however: if "the contents of historical reality are conceived . . . on account of the fundamental concepts," then, he adds, these fundamental concepts—as "theoretical"—reside in a different logical sphere than "the contents of historical reality." Hence, "the fundamental concepts are not a grammar by which artistic phenomena can be classified, but an a priori reagent" which creates the possibility of artistic form.[84]

Panofsky intimates how investigations into the ontological, the visual, and the methodological spheres function in the manner of a scientific experiment. As a priori, the universal antithesis of fullness and form is transcendental, or beyond perceptual experience; yet, as an a priori opposition, this antithesis is nevertheless the condition of possibility of the work of art. When considered from a "practical-methodological point of view," it follows that a priori concepts are "discovered and developed through experience." The conceptual system of scientific art history can best be developed, then, by beginning with the work of art and forming hypotheses about it. Art theory, in other words, begins with looking. Commencing with the work of art, the theoretician inquires into the fundamental concepts of fullness, form, time, space, and their relations to one another. The general questions generated by this inquiry are then proved or disproved by the visual record. In this way, "the art theoretician determines the goals toward which the empirical researcher orients himself step by step." Without orientation to the "state of affairs" offered by art theory, art history would, Panofsky writes, remain an aggregate of "one hundred, one thousand single observations."[85] As he indicates in the table, it is precisely through an orientation to art theory—that is, to the ontological sphere—that art history can be correlated into a unified system.

If Panofsky's table correlates the orientations of art theory and art

history, it also presupposes distinctions between art history and *Kunstwissenschaft.* One practice is initially separated from another by point of view. Atheoretical art history, analogous in the essay to a science of the thing (*Dingwissenschaft*), is an orientation toward the particular "sensuous characteristics," otherwise termed "the superficial style characteristics" or "stylistic symptoms," of the work of art. Accordingly, it is the task of atheoretical art history to bring monuments into spatiotemporal sequence and to characterize the style of these works. What Panofsky terms theoretical art history attends to formal or "artistic problems" in aesthetic phenomena in order to illuminate the style concepts and criteria we find in the middle columns of the table. Lastly, *Kunstwissenschaft* addresses itself to the "essence" of these stylistic criteria in order to "establish and develop the absolute antithesis of the fundamental concepts" of fullness, form, time, and space.

What I would like to draw attention to is the way in which "style" is the subject of inquiry of atheoretical, theoretical, and systematic art history. Although each pursues this subject according to its respective point of view, atheoretical, theoretical, and systematic art history, like the triumvirate of seeing, representing, and knowing, rely on one another in support of their inquiry. As the author is careful to point out, even atheoretical art history, as a "science of the thing," orients itself—whether consciously or not—to the artistic problems of theoretical art history. Theoretical art history, for its part, orients itself to questions of "stylistic criteria and its aggregate as well as to the forming principle of style and its unity." Panofsky further characterizes this latter understanding of style as "style in the innermost sense" ("Stil im inneren Sinn"). As in the registers of Panofsky's table, so here in his articulation of style: the reliance of one point of view on another results in a circuitous interdependency—what we might call the infolding of viewpoints inherent in the laying out of interpretation.

As the aesthetic phenomenon becomes a historical object, the work of art is connected to an expanded field of inquiry until, finally, as the theoretical object of *Kunstwissenschaft,* the question of the condition of possibility of artistic phenomena is investigated. The movement Panofsky traces from the aesthetic contemplation of a single object to the engagement with artistic problems, and onward to the ultimate goal of the discovery of fundamental concepts and principles, is likewise a trajectory from seeing to representation to knowledge. While an atheoretical art history is criticized by Panofsky for both isolating the object and considering it from an overly individual point of view, theoretical art history activates the object as the subject of art-historical problems. In this move

from seeing to representation, the work of art becomes a historical object that is queried and analyzed through the various methodologies of the history of art. Although, as Panofsky maintains, knowledge in the scientific sense cannot be achieved in art history, the historical object operates *as if* it were an object of possible knowledge when fundamental principles are pursued through the orientation of *Kunstwissenschaft.*

An example of the "blessing and curse of the academic study of art" is that artistic phenomena do not exist solely for themselves, but they also exist for us, and if we approach them from the point of view of the art historian, then they come to us "with absolutely specific demands." As a consequence, Panfosky wagers the following:

> "style" is for *Kunstwissenschaft* as "natural law" is for physics, with this exception: the world of *natural* "perceptual contents" is, so to speak, still an *Adiaphoron:* the lightning storm is, in and for itself, something entirely neutral. . . . The world of artworks, on the contrary, appears to us with absolutely specific demands. . . . [When] the art historian observes a work of art *sub specie* "style," . . . he should not give a new meaning to the work but translate the given meaning from the realm of the irrational into a rational sphere.[86]

While art history may set its sights on the systematicity of *Kunstwissenschaft,* artistic phenomena require interpretation. Wind summed up this state of affairs rather well in 1925: "in the field of culture," he writes, "we evaluate the importance of meanings; . . . in the field of nature we explain their existence."[87] Panofsky's early theoretical essays advocate for the determination of the fundamental concepts of art just as they demonstrate that meaning can only be found in and through the work of art. This negotiation of two points of view, this arrival of theory on the scene of what is seen, does not describe the gap to be bridged between knowledge and reality so much as the movement of thought itself. Wind's vivid description of the "methodical circle" of interpretation and Panofsky's own understanding of the need for "aesthetic recreation" register why the search for meaning in artistic phenomena is a perpetual dance between part and whole, between object and hypothesis.[88] In this sense, Panofsky's failure to fully establish the concept of art in his 1925 essay is not a failing so much as a revelation of an inherent rub in the academic study of art: namely, that we must "translate the given meaning of [aesthetic phenomena] from the realm of the irrational into a rational sphere." Considering the work of art as a unity, Panofsky proceeds *as if* the "truth" of the object could be revealed at the same time as he indicates why unitary meaning will always elude the art historian.

## The "Ideal World" of Style

The "art" of art history that we find in the central columns of Panofsky's table is balanced on either side by the transcendental categories of the work of art and art-historical methodology. The similarity of these categories and the manner in which they bracket the "phenomenal or visual sphere" of art demonstrate, to my mind, why style is such a powerful concept in the history of art and why it often appears like a hall of mirrors.[89] If style reverberates down the ontological, visual, and methodological alleys of art history, then Style, or style considered transcendentally, can be coordinated with any variety of historical styles. In this way close looking at artistic objects, the historical view of a period, and theoretical meditations on art would all find their place within a unified field of inquiry. This is possible because, with the concept of style, a new point of view is achieved that refers at once to the part and whole of objects, to objects and their contexts, as well as to the correlation of the elements in a systematic history of art. For Panofsky, "style determines the structure of the ideal world of objects."[90] Yet style per se is defined only in relation to itself—the opposing categories of time and space are analogous in Panofsky's table with the "living exchange" of fullness and form. As the ontological and the methodological spheres fold into one another, style is caught within its own hermeneutic circuit.

Panofsky's early theoretical essays, including the table of 1925, reveal how style serves as a kind of truth content for art history. If truth might be equated—rather simply—with coherence, and coherence defined as a matter of avoiding contradiction, then style allows us to follow the advice of St. Thomas: "When you meet a contradiction, make a distinction." As the musical analogy in Panofsky's 1915 essay makes clear, style, the most capacious concept in the history of art, is predicated on similarity *and* distinction. Style preserves coherence while offering difference. What contradicts one style might just be another style whose definition awaits the future, when one will have more evidence at hand or the historical distance necessary for retrospective analysis. Genealogical and proleptic, capacious, flexible, and analytically powerful, style, it seems, can never be wholly controverted. And so style remains an animating principle—a truth content, if you will—for art history and aesthetics.

Panofsky would later indicate the impossibility of finding the first principles of art history.[91] As his table suggests, however, this discovery is not really necessary. When style operates as an a priori principle, as a mode of description and analysis, and as a means by which to coordinate objects into historical sequences, then the drive to articulate the condi-

tions of possibility of style becomes unnecessary. As Panofsky's own iconographic method demonstrates, it is not necessary to determine the conditions of possibility of style so much as to retain the unity of the concept of style as an imaginary focus with which to guide one's inquiry into the meaning of the image. On this account, I would argue that Panofsky's much-lamented abandonment of theory might have less to do with his emigration to the United States in 1934 than with the discovery of a method that made this particular theoretical pursuit unnecessary.[92]

The 1925 table is Panofsky's first and last outlining of how a history of art might be constructed on first principles. In an essay first delivered in 1931 to the Kiel chapter of the Kant Society, "On the Problem of Description and Meaning in the Visual Arts" ("Zum Problem der Beschreibung und Inhaltsdeutung von Werken der bildenden Kunst"), this table would be replaced by the stages and materials of iconographical and iconological interpretation.[93] Turning from the pursuit of the transcendental-philosophical question of style to the ways and means of its historical appearances, Panofsky leaves behind his epistemological investigations. One might argue that the aims of a scientific art history are still registered in the pursuit of iconology. If iconology is understood as "the search for intrinsic meanings or content,"[94] however, then art history—as a branch of the humanities—sets itself in search of a knowledge that can never be fully grasped. The pursuit of intrinsic meaning is nonetheless fundamental to the discipline since this pursuit presupposes a use of the theory and interpretation required to transform the aesthetic phenomenon into an object in and for the history of art. Since style might be the concept with which to describe and enact these various operations, a critical definition of style becomes less necessary than the deployment of a concept of style within the unified space of art history.

Panofsky's "The Concept of Artistic Volition" concludes as follows: "There is a contemporary point of view which stresses too strongly the argument against the theory of imitation, but art is not a subjective expression of feelings or the confirmation of the existence of certain individuals; it is a discussion, aimed at the achievement of valid results, that objectifies and realizes a formative force, using material which has to be mastered."[95] It is well known that the material of art history was mastered through Panofsky's own iconographic method. As in the 1925 table, where greater unity and disciplinary coherence are achieved in the movement from the visual sphere of the work of art to an understanding of the history of art, so the use of documents carries us away from the work it seeks to explain. The tables from Panofsky's famous essay of 1939, "Iconography and Iconology," demonstrate how interpretation moves further away from the work in the search for deeper meaning of it.

In a similar way, the generic concept of a period brings the most objects together under one umbrella of style: "Gothic" man and Gothic cathedral are, so to speak, rendered on a single, unified plane, one which is, at the same time, separated from us by centuries of historical distance.[96] If, as Wind assumes, considering the work of art as merely an aesthetic phenomenon isolates the object in its particularity, then generic concepts such as "Gothic" or "Renaissance" come with a ready definition that the works of art of these historical periods often cannot match.[97] The generic concept, the most powerfully inclusive concept, is itself predicated on a distinction that perhaps excludes as much as it includes.[98]

Like the concept of causality, which concerns the connections between things or events rather than things or events themselves, the concept of style does not exist in individual works of art but in the relation between them. Drawing out a main strand of Cassirer's *Substance and Function* for our purposes here, we may note that any reference to similarity among works of art already assumes the function of a concept of relation that brings individual works of art together in a series, group, or genre of similar works of art. The concept of style rests on the concept of relation. When art historians employ the concept of style, however, they most often do so by surreptitiously introducing this relation between works of art into the visual qualities of the work of art itself.

Listen closely to Edgar Wind as he outlines this move in regard to Wölfflin's "general forms": "This general form is now reified as a perceptible entity with its own history. The logical tendency towards formalization, which lends to the theory of aesthetic form a degree of precision which it cannot justify in its own right, is thus combined with a tendency towards hypostatization which turns the formula, once it has been established, into the living subject of historical development."[99] As the art historian proceeds to ferret out the similarities between works of art, arraying artistic objects in series or groups of objects, it should come as no surprise that generic categories are established, including what we term "period styles." Wind's gloss on Wölfflin emphasizes the value and usefulness of period styles and other stylistic formalizations of works of art: these moves not only enable us to categorize objects within a field of inquiry, they also smooth the transition from unique object to "the living subject of historical development," thereby permitting us to animate the work of art as the product of a maker, a time and a place.

For all the reasons why the hypostatization of the concept of style is useful to art historians, it nonetheless brings us squarely into the trap of circular argumentation. When this move is stated baldly, as it is by the scientist Edward Harrison, then it appears rather laughably obvious.

> Owing to the aura of progress investing the notion of evolution, we use fittest, advantageous, and other terms that are saturated with value concepts. When we try to justify our value concepts we find ourselves trapped in circular argumentation. Individuals surviving are the fittest, but what are the fittest? Obviously, those that survive. Individuals having advantageous variations reproduce and flourish, and what are advantageous variations? Obviously, those that reproduce and flourish. Whenever a value judgment trespasses into the physical universe it chases its tail.[100]

Translated into the vocabulary of art history, Harrison's words resonate with what Ernst Gombrich and Svetlana Alpers have reminded us about the saturation of value concepts inherent in the generic category "Renaissance": "Renaissance" not only excludes what it otherwise might include, it has traditionally instituted a value system that favors—if not highly prizes—the art of the Italian Renaissance over northern European art of the same period.

I have traced the methodical circle several times in this chapter. Panofsky's early essays and his tactic of "aesthetic recreation" demonstrate the impossibility of standing outside this circle at the same time as these essays seek to determine the contours and limits of this circle so as to shore up a unified field of inquiry for the objects of art history. As the concept of style moves with a deft sleight of hand from the concept of relation to the visual qualities of the work of art itself, it performs operations of relation and description simultaneously. Undergirding the logical and methodological legerdemain of Loran's demonstrations and Panofsky's table, style creates a history of art just as it obscures the operative traces of its own "logical moment."

## Representation and Historicity

In the essay he read to the Kiel chapter of the Kant Society in 1931, Panofsky cites from Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics,* a book published two years earlier. Concluding his study of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason,* Heidegger describes the inherent violence in interpretation: "Certainly, in order to wring from what the words say, what it is they want to say, every interpretation must necessarily use violence. Such violence, however, cannot be roving arbitrariness. The power of an idea which shines forth must drive and guide the laying-out [*Auslegung*]" of interpretation.[101] After reading this passage by Heidegger, Panofsky explains to the Kant Society how his own method, including his use of documents, mitigates the violence in interpretation through a careful search for the intrinsic meaning in historical works of art.

Yet Panofsky's quotation of Heidegger omits a crucial, final sentence from the paragraph cited: "Only in the power of this idea [which shines forth]," Heidegger continues, "can an interpretation risk what is always audacious, namely, entrusting itself to the concealed inner passion of a work in order to be able, through this, to place itself within the unsaid and force it into speech. This is one way, however, by which the guiding idea, in its power to illuminate, comes to light."[102] For Heidegger, Kant's first *Critique* was not simply a historical treatise, it was a living text in history. Consequently the meaning of the *Critique* could be read anew, as Heidegger did when, focusing on the first version of Kant's magnum opus, he opened it up to an ontological rather than an epistemological explanation. Likewise, it was the manner in which the Florentine Renaissance work of art was alive in its historicity that enabled Aby Warburg to study it in a deep historical sense while, at the same time, perceiving its emotive and thematic ties to a present human condition.[103] Finally, Panofsky himself might be criticized for at times becoming overly constrained within the cosmos of his own method, as when he suggests too close a link between the artwork and the personality of Michelangelo,[104] for example, or between Gothic architecture and scholasticism.[105] Yet it was his critical reinterpretations of Riegl's texts—his reading of Riegl against the grain—that enabled him to use and modify the *Kunstwollen* as an a priori principle in his early theoretical essays.

If there are to be points of contact between atheoretical, theoretical, and systematic art history, these might lie in a thoughtful engagement with history that would likewise permit images to remain potent in their historicity.[106] I conclude with a plea for history because in our contemporary condition—aptly described in German as a *Bilderflut*, or flood tide of images—the history of images is effaced along with, perhaps, their power to do more than distract attention or to illustrate a point.[107] Hovering somewhere at the other extreme, we may note the way the classification of an artwork as a "masterpiece" has the tendency to draw a large viewing audience to the work at the same time as it raises the image above the fray of historical debate. Like Wind's description, in 1924, of the trouble with the aesthetic point of view, the designation of an aesthetic phenomenon as a "masterpiece" isolates the individual work of art, enabling it to be "simply *there*," with "no other meaning than its own," since its own meaning and status is deemed reason enough for its existence and display.[108]

I have argued that Panofsky's early theoretical essays chart the movement from seeing to representing to knowing as the points of view of atheoretical, theoretical, and systematic art history. While the intrinsic laws of aesthetic phenomena might be adumbrated through a transcendental vantage point, only an active engagement with the work of art

leads us from description to understanding to meaning. "Seeing" the work of art is crucial, in other words. Panofsky, in keeping with his own fear of the "arbitrariness" of "modern aesthetics" and his desire for a unified history of art, advises us not to rest there but to move on toward more theoretical points of view.

Acknowledging how "very comfortable" it would be for us "if art theory and art history had nothing to do with one another," Panofsky points out that, in reality, art theory and art history are "reciprocally related."[109] Indeed, a balance between art history and art theory leads to the solution of art-historical problems. Theorizing "seeing" in his 1911 essay, Panofsky brings together perception, expression, and representation into a single root of style. Wrestling further with what might constitute a unitary principle of style, he presents a more nuanced understanding of Riegl's *Kunstwollen.* Abandoning the search for a critical definition of artistic volition for the operations of a "principle of style," he then sets out to refine the method by which he would become famous. If theory arrives through an engagement with artistic phenomena, this investigation should encompass a wide-ranging sense of theory and method. Panofsky implies as much in July 1927, when, commenting on the "future tasks and directions for research" of art history for the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung,* he sets an expanding field of artistic objects and the development of art-historical method in a dialectical relation.[110] A spirited search for meaning in artistic phenomena, and the negotiation of empirical, objective, and transcendental points of view, animates Panofsky's early theoretical essays. Rather than consider atheoretical, theoretical, and systematic art history according to the differing inquiries that define them, we might—following in the spirit of Panofsky—set these fields in relation to each other and into a force field of theoretical inquiry.[111] If, as Goethe famously put it, "every fact is already theory," theory, after all, begins with looking.

Just as Panofsky outlines a systematic investigation of artistic phenomena as the interaction of the empirical, objective, and theoretical points of view, Kantian philosophy turns on the negotiation of near and far. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* the philosopher demonstrates how cognition relies on "two transcendentals," the standpoint of the finite and the infinite. According to Kant, the negotiation of these points of view lends truth content to our perceptions. The following chapter will examine the Kantian sublime as a movement from immediate experience to the point of view necessary for systematic knowledge. Kant's *Critique of Judgment* demonstrates why the inquiry into aesthetic phenomena proceeds with knowledge as its imaginary focus. At the same time, the philosopher demonstrates the impossibility of gaining conceptual knowledge of aesthetic phenomena.

CHAPTER TWO

# *The Dialectics of Decay*

## Rereading the Kantian Subject

We do not comprehend ruins until we become ruins ourselves.
HEINRICH HEINE

In his 1940 essay "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," Erwin Panofsky portrays the aged Kant (1724–1804) in a vignette that introduces the reader to the concept of *humanitas.*

> Nine days before his death Immanuel Kant was visited by his physician. Old, ill, and nearly blind, he rose from his chair and stood trembling with weakness and muttering unintelligible words. Finally his faithful companion realized that he would not sit down until the visitor had taken a seat. This he did, and Kant then permitted himself to be helped to his chair and, after having regained some of his strength, said, "Das Gefühl für Humanität hat mich noch nicht verlassen"—"The sense of humanity has not yet left me." The two men were moved almost to tears. For, though the word *Humanität* had come, in the eighteenth century, to mean little more than politeness or civility, it had, for Kant, a much deeper significance, which the circumstances of the moment served to emphasize: man's proud and tragic consciousness of self-approved and self-imposed principles, contrasting with his utter subjection to illness, decay and all that is implied in the word "mortality."[1]

Straining his feeble body to embody his principles, Kant poignantly revealed to his guests an abiding and animating humanity, a sense all but lost among the empty gestures of "politeness or civility" in contemporary German society. In this vignette Panofsky not only demonstrates the importance of *humanitas* for a weary philosopher. Since concepts as they

have become might not be concepts are they are, he also implies the necessity of recovering their "deeper significance," a rescue operation that features prominently in his own iconographic method. But what of Kant, the bearer of an old-fashioned humanity? Here the "self-approved and self-imposed principles" of the philosopher's moral law triumph over the creeping mortality of his own decaying body.

In "Modernist Painting," an essay of 1963, Clement Greenberg declares Kant "the first real Modernist." He continues:

> The essence of Modernism lies, as I see it, in the use of characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself, not in order to subvert it but in order to entrench it more firmly in its area of competence. Kant used logic to establish the limits of logic, and while he withdrew much from its old jurisdiction, logic was left all the more secure in what there remained to it. . . .
>
> Each art, it turned out, had to effect this demonstration on its own account. What had to be exhibited and made explicit was that which was unique and irreducible not only in art in general, but also in each particular art. Each art had to determine, through the operations peculiar to itself, the effects peculiar and exclusive to itself. By doing this each art would, to be sure, narrow its area of competence, but at the same time it would make its possession of this area all the more secure.[2]

Panofsky highlights the centrality of the exercise of practical reason for Kant's life and work; Greenberg champions the manner in which Kant had tested the foundations of a field of inquiry. Applying reason rather than dogmatic metaphysics to test the limits of reason in his first *Critique,* Kant demonstrated how the power of judgment could determine the conditions of possibility of reason itself. Guided by Kant's method, it follows, one could examine the fundamental limits of each of the visual arts, thus securing the unique parameters of the medium of painting, for instance. According to Greenberg, "the ineluctable flatness of the support" set painting apart from other artistic media.[3] Beginning with the art of Manet, "modernist painting," by calling attention to the flatness of the canvas, had tested the artistic medium of painting on its own terms, a self-critical "operation" that—*pace* Greenberg—had purified painting of all that was foreign to it as a medium.[4]

Panofsky and Greenberg trace the outline of the Kantian legacy in the discipline of art history. These brief accounts suggest how Kant's philosophy has been construed as "moments of discipline"—over the body, over a field of inquiry or a medium.[5] On the contrary, I will argue that figuring Kant's philosophical legacy as one of discipline misses the richness of the struggle with which Kant was himself engaged and to which his

philosophical enterprise bears testament. Panofsky and Greenberg are not to be faulted entirely for their transcriptions of Kantian philosophy into the pages of art history, however. Kant himself championed a subject of reason. Why he might have done so becomes more apparent when we consider Kantian subjectivity in its philosophical and historical contexts.

If we found a subject conceived through a fundamental dualism of reason and unreason in Kant's philosophy, then this might lead us to reconsider the genealogy of the so-called modern subject. Perhaps the modern subject established by Nietzsche and Freud, and later revitalized in the philosophy of poststructuralism, has its roots in the eighteenth century after all. In addition to filling out the historical record, such a discovery would force us to consider why the discipline of art history might need the version of Kant we find in Panofsky's 1940 essay "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline" or in Clement Greenberg's 1963 account "Modernist Painting." This chapter argues that by reducing the legacy of Kantian philosophy to an idealized subject, art history has found the Kant it has sought—the version of his philosophy that stands so well for notions of judgment and mastery required for the "purity" of our field of inquiry.

Ruins offer a provocative site with which to begin a critique of the idealized Kantian subject. Considering the immense popularity of ruins at the end of the eighteenth century, it is striking that Kant never discusses their aesthetic experience in his third *Critique,* especially since ruins seem obvious catalysts of the Kantian sublime.[6] More specifically, ruins appear exemplary of the Kantian dynamic sublime, an occasion that entails a presentation of nature's unbounded force. This chapter will offer an explanation for this absence by examining it within Kant's aesthetic theory and his philosophy of history. An investigation of the dialectics of decay will allow us to interrogate the constitution and foundational premises of the Kantian subject through the sign of his own demise.[7] Like James Ensor's imaginative projection of a body in ruin, *My Portrait in 1960,* an etching of 1888 (fig. 2), we will strain the Kantian edifice by incorporating the ruin—as emblem and idea—within the framework of the philosopher's own system, thereby yielding a picture of the subject that may prove less coherent than Panofsky and Greenberg suggest.

By inquiring into the absence of ruins from Kant's critical enterprise, I intend neither to take the philosopher to task for what he was not fascinated by nor to formulate a critique based on his failure to include ruins. My aim, I should emphasize, is not to settle the question of Kant's disregard of decay but to generate new and productive directions for this inquiry. One could, in fact, immediately conjecture why ruins do not make an appearance in the analytic of the sublime by pointing out how, for

2. James Ensor, *My Portrait in 1960,* 1888, etching. Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas. Anonymous Gift.

Kant, they may involve a determinate concept, and so may suffer the same fate as architecture or sculpture in his aesthetic theory. Yet, as we shall see, in his *Critique of Judgment* Kant mentions certain architectural structures as examples of the sublime in nature. The inclusion of these examples does not represent a contradiction in his system, since he considers these not as architectural structures per se but the *effect* of them on the beholder. As I will argue, ruins may have a similar effect on the beholder, and so may be considered—along with Kant's architectural examples—as vehicles for experiences of the sublime.

My query goes deeper, then, and investigates how Kant's blindness to the contemporaneous cult of ruins may be emblematic of his own unwillingness to champion a less-than-idealized, or "ruined," subject. Following Rousseau, Kant considered absolute freedom "'a matter for all humanity,' not only as academic doctrine. Its aim was 'to liberate subjectivity' in the reflective process of a rational life in search of 'self-unity.'"[8] Since it is the transcendental subject who ascends toward the absolute freedom of theoretical and practical reason, Kant accords greater value to the transcendental subject than to the subject of sensibility. Nevertheless, the experience of the empirical subject is vital for Kantian systematics.

The trajectory of the Kantian subject is clearly marked "from bondage, to instinct to rational control—in a word, from the tutelage of nature to the state of freedom," and it is in this passage from nature to reason that human history is said to begin.[9] Indeed, for Kant any "wish for a return to an age of simplicity and innocence" is considered "futile." As he continues in his essay of 1786, "Conjectural Beginnings of Human History," "between the subject and that imagined place of bliss, restless reason would interpose itself, irresistibly impelling him to develop the faculties implanted within him." In the experience of the sublime, as we shall see, reason "uses" nature for its own ends, thereby elevating the subject out of nature and into "a higher purposiveness." In this sense, the sublime is characteristic of the Kantian idea of the progress of human nature. According to Kant, the progress from barbarism to culture can occur only in society, for it is only in society that we develop our morality.

While the Kantian sublime elevates the subject above nature, the ruin implicates the subject squarely in nature. The detemporalization of moral feeling—or the supersensible—in the Kantian sublime thus stands in marked contrast to the temporalization of the subject memorialized in the ruin. Without nature, Kant writes, there can be no morality. Without morality, on the other hand, culture is but "glittering misery."[10] As an emblem of the undoing of human culture—and by extension, the progress of morality—by the forces of nature, we might conjecture that ruins were nothing more for Kant than "glittering misery." Defined in this manner, ruins are certainly out of place in an account of the triumph of human reason over internal and external nature. In this sense the ruin opens up (to borrow the poignant words of Kierkegaard) "the wounds of possibility" by exposing to view what had been covered over in the constitution of an idealized Kantian subject. Not permitted to linger in the realm of nature, the idealized Kantian subject is a subject of reason, meaning that the subject is both constituted by and subjected to reason.

Seven years before he was to publish his treatise on aesthetic judgment, Kant wrote in *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, "All false art, all vain wisdom, lasts its time but finally destroys itself, and its highest culture is also the epoch of its decay."[11] While Kant writes of the demise of "false art" and "vain wisdom," he does not concern himself with processes of decay. Rather, in his system reason casts a retrospective glance on a landscape of its own constitution only to propel itself toward a prospective and more coherent future. Kant's concern is not with the past but for the future, through the vehicle of the present. And it is the subject, as bearer of both "a-sociable sociability" and reason, who, it is hoped, will drive historical progress forward toward ever greater vistas of that freedom known as pure morality. Kant's so-called Copernican revolution in

philosophy is a turn toward the subject as "*Weltbaumeister,*" a subject/architect who builds a world according to the texture and limits of human reason.

It is the subject as *Weltbaumeister* who makes sense of the world in Kant's philosophical enterprise. Just as the totality of nature is presumed to function according to a system of laws, so the mind of the subject is subjected to a world of order. The Kantian subject makes sense of the world precisely by matching his cognitive laws with those of nature, and it is in this reciprocal lawfulness that the subject finds himself at home in the world. Yet, as Kant explains in the *Critique of Judgment,* it is not empirical laws but rather transcendental laws that form the fixed points around which understanding revolves:

> We saw in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that the totality of nature as the sum of all objects of experience forms a system according to transcendental laws, which the understanding itself gives a priori to appearances, insofar as their connection in one consciousness is to constitute experience. . . . But it does not follow from this that nature is a system comprehensible by human cognition through empirical laws, or that the common systematic unity of its appearances in one experience (hence experience as a system) is possible for humankind. For the variety and diversity of empirical laws might be so great that . . . we were confronted by a crude, chaotic aggregate totally devoid of system, even though we had to presuppose a system in accordance with transcendental laws.[12]

From the above passage we learn that the understanding gives to itself the transcendental laws a priori. The transcendental laws—those laws that bring order to the potential disorder of empiricism—are present from the outset and structure understanding.[13] Although nature may be witnessed in experience as nothing more than a "chaotic aggregate" of empirical laws, the transcendental laws allow the subject to assume a systematic unity of the totality of nature, to operate as if this systematic unity were a law, despite nature's often "crude" appearances to the contrary.

In her book *The Unity of Reason,* Susan Neiman reminds us that "the development of a taxonomy of the human mind was a common project of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophy."[14] Kant's division of the mind into the faculties of sensibility, understanding, and reason therefore point to his own historical context. Yet Kant would reinterpret the role of reason: "Kant concludes that it is reason—the capacity freely to prescribe its own principles to experience, not understanding's capacity to know it—that makes us human."[15] Whereas the faculties of sensibility and understanding are tied to the world of experience, reason is autonomous of sensuous experience. In this sense, for Kant, reason is the realm

of freedom.[16] In the preceding passage from the *Critique of Judgment* Kant explains that the attempt of the faculty of understanding to connect the manifold data of experience according to empirical laws would likely result in nothing better than a "chaotic aggregate." Reason, offering to the faculty of the understanding the transcendental laws a priori, provides the ground for the possible unity of experience, "an order of its own according to ideas, to which it adapts the empirical conditions" given to the understanding.[17]

According to Kant, it is the subject's desire to live in accord with reason's demands, and it is reason's "peculiar fate" to press itself toward questions and ends it often cannot answer or attain.[18] What Kant calls this "peculiar fate" is, however, anything but a failing. As Neiman rightly states, the "autonomy of the principles of reason permits them to function as a standard by which experience can be judged: by providing a vision of intelligibility that the given world does not meet, they urge us to continue our labors until this idea is attained."[19] In his three *Critiques* Kant demonstrates how reason operates as a regulative principle, guiding understanding, moral action, and judgment. Operating on the world of experience rather than constituted through it, reason provides the possibility of organization and so shapes the world according to its own moral image.[20]

Unlike the faculty of the understanding, which enables the subject to feel at home in the world, reason is not of the natural world, nor is it at home in it. The faculty of the understanding is directed toward knowledge of the world as it is, whereas the efforts of reason are exerted in the name of the future—toward a world as it should be, or will one day become. Reason and nature are therefore constituted as separate spheres in the Kantian system. For Neiman, this "duality of reason and the world" makes Kant's philosophy "profoundly modern."[21] While a duality of reason and nature is certainly constitutive of the Kantian subject, "the unity of reason" is his ascendant principle. As a result, the Kantian subject is at once implicated in nature and transcendental to it.

The existence and unity of reason allow the Kantian subject ultimate accommodation in the face of that which may initially overwhelm sensibility and understanding. Just as the moral end is the final purpose of the subject, the moral totality, what Kant calls the "highest good," is the ultimate goal of history. Addressed to a subject of mortality and displaying a culture undone, the ruin might therefore be said to overturn the rational history of the Kantian subject as well as the philosopher's belief in the progress of empirical history.[22] On this account, it is perhaps not surprising to discover that Kant does not use the ruin as an emblem of the sublime in his third *Critique,* nor he does allow the idea of ruin to overtake

the subject. Ensor's body in ruin has no place within Kant's aesthetic theory or his philosophy of history.

## Kant's Cosmos

Twenty-six years before embarking upon his first critical project, *The Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781, Kant penned his *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens.* In this early work the young Kant sensitively describes how "the contemplation of a starry heaven on a pleasant night affords a kind of enjoyment which is felt only by noble souls. Out of the universal stillness of Nature and the repose of the senses, the immortal soul's secret capacity for knowledge speaks an unnamed language and gives us implicit concepts which can be felt but not described."[23] While the juvenile Kant was moved upon communion with nature by "concepts which can be felt but not described," the august philosopher of the critiques was driven—to use the telling words of his biographer—by the imperative "need to translate the unnameable language of feeling into the precise and clear tongue of the understanding, and to make the 'secret capacity for knowledge' itself manifest and lucid."[24] To be sure, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* demonstrates how scientific knowledge shifts the center of gravity of experience. Yet if in the first *Critique* nature is overcome by reason, nature is never entirely left behind. The "unnamed language" of nature is an essential feature of Kant's philosophy, though the philosopher himself champions the reason of the subject. By "nature," I mean to imply exterior nature and the subject's own internal nature.

Rather than a ready philosophy of alternatives, I want to argue that Kant conceives of nature and reason as a fundamental dualism in dialectical relation. As we shall see, in the experience of "the starry heavens and the moral law" or, later, in his sections on the sublime in the third *Critique,* Kant suggests how reason and nature harmonize, or fold together. Taking chaos theory as a point of departure may enable us to conceptualize the relation of nature and reason in Kantian subjectivity.[25] Chaos theory describes processes of dynamic interrelation within a system, or macrocosmos, and the transformation from chaos to pattern within the microsystems of a macrocosmos. In this way, chaos theory demonstrates how change is required for progress within a system as well as the way change is incorporated into a system over time. Returning to Kant's philosophy, we may note that the cluster of terms denoting the "nature" of the subject—what Kant refers to as the subject's temporal finitude, "animality," and "a-sociable sociability," for example—are fundamentally at odds with "reason." At the same time, nature is necessary for Kant be-

cause interrelations of nature and reason mark the subject's journey toward the moral law and society's striving toward the "highest good." As in chaos theory, then, so in Kantian systematics nature and reason are dynamically related; over time, the chaos of nature is incorporated into the cosmos of reason. Nature, in other words, has a necessary role in the composition of Kantian subjectivity, though the philosopher himself did not view it in this way.

One thing is certain: Kant sets the subject on a trajectory from nature to reason, or nature to freedom. In this respect, the path of Kantian subjectivity echoes movements of objectivity and disciplinarity. The concluding section of this chapter touches on these moves. While the subject cannot overcome his own nature, nature folds into reason over the *longue durée,* and I want to consider the way in which this happens. To my mind, the repercussions of this relationship between nature and reason—and with them, the distinctive features of Kantian subjectivity—have been distorted or covered over in idealized readings.

Accenting the transcendental nature of the subject, idealized readings of Kantian subjectivity miss the manner in which, for Kant, the subject is at once tied to space and time and independent of it.[26] The subject's orientation to internal and external nature is a matter of point of view, a negotiation in which the power of judgment plays a central role. If the juvenile philosopher's musings on the night sky intimate the language of feeling, his contemplation of "the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me" offers us the essential contours of Kantian subjectivity. Follow Kant as he concludes the second volume of the critical philosophy, the *Critique of Practical Reason* of 1788:

> Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and more steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me. I do not merely conjecture them and seek them as though obscured in darkness or in the transcendent region beyond my horizon: I see them before me, and I associate them directly with the consciousness of my own existence. The former begins at the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and it broadens the connection in which I stand into an unbounded magnitude of worlds beyond worlds and systems of systems and into the limitless times of their periodic motion, their beginning and their continuance. The latter begins at my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world which has true infinity but which is comprehensible only to the understanding—a world with which I recognize myself as existing in a universal and necessary (and not only, as in the first case, contingent) connection, and thereby also in connection with all those visible worlds. The former view of a countless multitude of worlds annihilates, as it were, my importance as an animal creature, which must

> give back to the planet (a mere speck in the universe) the matter from which it came, the matter which is for a little time provided with vital force, we know not how. The latter, on the contrary, infinitely raises my worth as that of an intelligence by my personality, in which the moral law reveals a life independent of all animality and even of the whole world of sense—at least so far as it may be inferred from the purposive destination assigned to my existence by this law, a destination which is not restricted to the conditions and limits of this life but reaches into the infinite.[27]

Consider how Kant's scene involves a single subject. This individual has incorporated, as it were, the points of view we find in Plato's dialogue: seeing, representing, and knowing come together under the auspices of the starry heavens and the moral law. Whereas the view of the starry heavens initially "annihilates" the "importance" of the subject by reminding him of his inevitable mortality, or the fact that he "must give back to the planet . . . the manner from which it came," the moral law elevates the subject out of his station as "a mere speck in the universe" and into the possibility of infinity.

Considered from the point of view of nature, or "animality," the subject is limited by his sensibility; viewed from the vantage of reason, or "the moral law," the subject—endowed with the power of reason—grasps hold of the idea of the infinite. Although, as Kant makes clear, true infinity is impossible for the subject on account of the radical finitude of sensibility, infinity is nevertheless conceived as a task (*Aufgabe*) that orients our thoughts and actions.[28] The starry heavens and the moral law, though ultimately out of reach, awaken the subject to the idea of infinity. As reason guides the subject in the discovery of these ideas, so it provides guidance for what would otherwise be chaotic action. Serving as an imaginary focus, the ideas of reason thus permit a common standpoint. Kant champions the subject of reason. Guided by the moral law as a regulative principle, the idealized Kantian subject discovers his "universal and necessary" connection to the universe in the contemplation of the starry skies.

If the Thales anecdote tells of the yearning for the transcendental and the failure of the empirical point of view, then the use of theory as an instrument implies the vantage point of the Kantian stargazer. Having the choice to follow the moral law or not, the subject is constituted in his freedom at the same time as he is given the coordinates with which to make the connection between near and far, subjective and objective, empirical and transcendental. Here the transition from *vita contemplativa* to *vita activa* is a scene of representation: theory, seeing the world, becomes the use of theory to form the world as representation; finally, through the dis-

covery of the moral law, theory provides a transcendental point of view onto both perception and understanding. While the Kantian subject partakes of the desire, or, as Hannah Arendt would put it, the human condition, to exceed the bounds of his own space and time, his wonder does not go awry.[29] Viewed historically, this idealized Kantian subject is both powerful and poignant: following the Copernican revolution, and more recently the devastating Lisbon earthquake of 1755, Kant's *Critique* provides the subject with analytic security at the same time as the laws of nature—and natural force—appeared to be pulling the ground from under his feet.[30]

In addition to offering a vivid account of the role of reason, the concluding passage to the second *Critique* demonstrates the crucial role of experience (*Erfahrung*) for Kantian subjectivity. Kantian experience is a making sense of the world that includes sensation, understanding, and reason, or seeing, representing, and pure knowing. Here the mind's independence from nature is charted in the movement from the appearance (*Erscheinung*) of the starry skies to the subject's experience (*Erfahrung*) of them, an experience that culminates in the discovery of "the moral law within."[31] In this ascent, in this shift from the empirical to the transcendental point of view, the subject finds his autonomy, which is to say not merely a "life independent of all animality," but also, and more importantly, an orientation in thinking through the point of view of reflective judgment.[32] Mediating between the higher cognitive faculties of understanding and reason, judgment books passage between the "great gulf" separating the realms of nature and freedom. Judgment effects this transition by making "the supersensible substrate . . . *determinable by means of the intellectual faculty.*"[33]

What is of signal importance here is the way the power of judgment enables the subject to conceive as a task or a question what ultimately lies beyond his reach—in so doing, the power of judgment carries the subject from the world of sensuous appearance (*Erscheinung*) to the experience (*Erfahrung*) of "the moral law within." As Karl Ameriks suggests, "This means that the fundamental 'self' that autonomously 'generates' the basic laws of morality is *not defined* as a human self, even though we actually become aware of the laws only as exemplified in concrete spatiotemporal, that is, human contexts."[34] For Kant, in other words, subjectivity is conceived as a dialectic of nature and reason. If, as Kant says, nature is not meant to lead reason "by a string," then reason used without spatiotemporal experience is subject to the "chaos" and "night" of undirected, if not overheated, ventures.[35]

While the spatiotemporal subject—the subject of sensation—and the world of appearance are crucial for Kantian experience, the role of judg-

ment distinguishes the philosopher's account. The power of judgment orients perceptions into a higher order of integration, thereby constituting an object of experience. Again, the regulative role of reason is essential here, as is the desire of the subject to understand and know the world. In the words of Kant:

> Now it is clear that the reflective judgment could not undertake in accordance with its nature to *classify* the whole of nature according to its empirical variety, if it did not presuppose that nature itself *specifies* its transcendental laws according to some principle. This principle can now be no other than that of the suitability to the faculty of judgment itself, to find sufficient affinity in the immeasurable manifoldness of things in accordance with empirical laws in order to bring them under empirical concepts (classes) and these under more universal laws (higher species) and thus to be able to attain to an empirical system of nature.[36]

In making sense of the world of experience, reflective judgment uses the methodological principles of genera, specification, and affinity. Admitting of "both a logical and a transcendental use," which is to say a use of both empirical and hypothetical judgments, these principles guide the procedure of organizing concepts and laws into a classificatory system.[37]

As the regulative use of reason guides the subject in making sense of the world, so Kant's proposed unity of reason propels the subject to complete the classificatory system of universal concepts and laws. Yet this edifice of thought will "remain forever uncompleted." To follow Kant, though reason "ascends ever higher" in its pursuit of knowledge, "the questions never cease." Moreover, although "reason is able to supply the ideal of a completely adequate system of scientific knowledge, it cannot anticipate the manner in which empirical knowledge will achieve this systematic structure" since it is incumbent on the individual, autonomous subject to complete the edifice, or architectonic, of systematic thought.[38] Hence, despite his "championing of certain *a priori* aspects of the project of epistemology, Kant was sensitive to the manner in which human empirical knowledge is an ongoing and self-correcting enterprise in which experience plays a central role."[39]

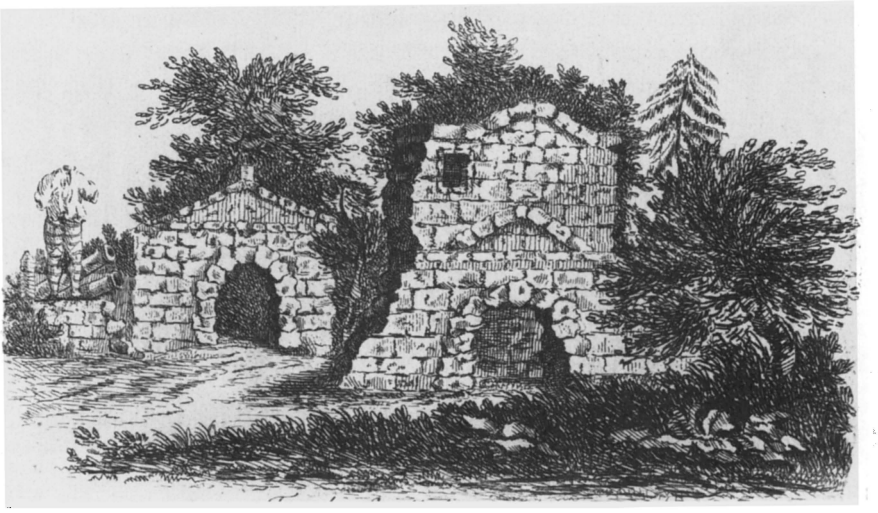
The existence and unity of reason allow the Kantian subject ultimate accommodation in the face of that which may initially overwhelm sensibility and understanding. Just as Kant does not use the ruin as an emblem of the sublime in his third *Critique,* so does he not allow the idea of ruin to overtake the subject. While the sublime commences in a failure of classification, as we shall see, this inadequacy is resolved through the power of judgment. In this way the experience of the sublime involves a shift in point of view analogous to the one we find in the passage on "the starry

heavens above me and the moral law within me." In the transition from seeing to representing to pure knowing, the subject moves in thought from the empirical vantage of his spatiotemporal context to the transcendental point of view of the supersensible faculty.

## Responses to Ruin(s) and the Late Eighteenth-Century Subject

Bearing in mind Kant's omission, it appears a faint irony of history that by the time the philosopher had published the third *Critique* in 1790, the European continent was littered with ruins. While dilettantes and archeologists were discovering and excavating sites in ancient Greece and on the Italian peninsula, artists were recording their findings for audiences longing for a connection with civilizations past. George Bickham's engraving of a sham ruin of the mid-eighteenth century, *The Temple of Modern Virtue* in the celebrated and highly cultivated English garden at Stowe, demonstrates that the contemporaneous cult of ruins encompassed not only the discovery and illustration of the antique but also the construction of the artificial or sham ruin (fig. 3). Artificial ruins, whether placed in gardens or painted on canvas, were quite popular in the eighteenth century. An increasing historical consciousness as well a new emphasis on feeling and the picturesque contributed to the interest in actual and artificial ruins.[40] In the artificial ruins at Stowe, modern virtue is literally and satirically represented in ruin, a notion diametrically opposed to Kant's idea of moral progress.

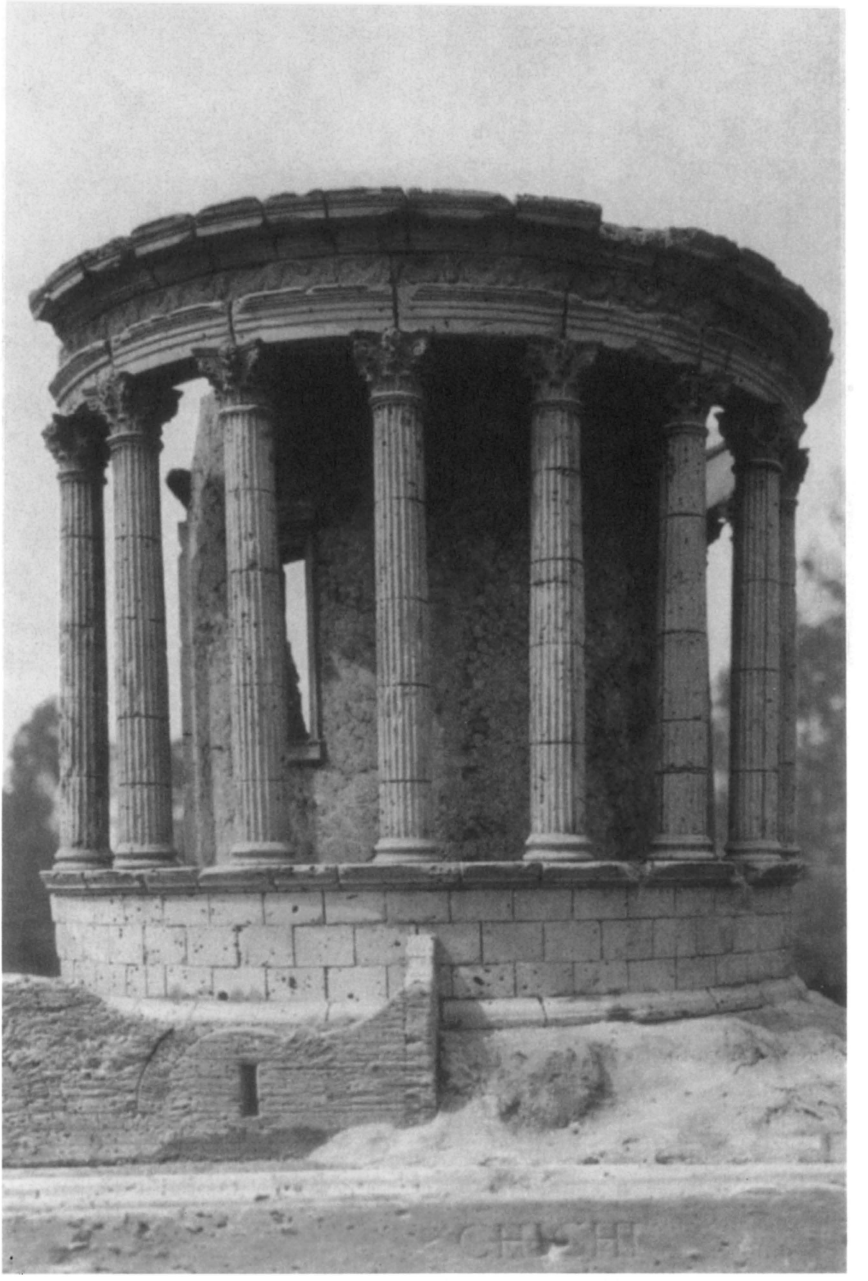
While artificial ruins were certainly popular, actual ruins, especially those of ancient architecture, were sought-after objects of study or contemplation at the end of the eighteenth century. In addition to the more customary drawings and paintings, cork models of ancient architecture elicited a certain fascination. Busy in his Roman workshop, Antonio Chichi crafted cork models of the ancient architecture in the environs of his homeland, such as the Temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli (fig. 4). Cork was found to be a perfect material for evoking the texture of decay, even for the depiction of the foliage that threatens to choke off the architecture in some Chichi's models, a sign of simultaneous erosion and renewal that imparts to these works an even greater sense of poetic melancholy. Known by the quality and quantity of his work as the most important cork modeler of his day, Chichi was mentioned by several of his contemporaries in the world of literature, including Goethe, who wrote of him in the 1786 diaries of his *Italian Journey.* Entire suites of Chichi's models were commissioned for princely collections in the German cities of Darmstadt, Gotha, Kassel, and Berlin, where they remain today.[41]



3. George Bickham, *The Temple of Modern Virtue,* 1750, engraving. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Photograph by Richard Caspole.

Paintings of ruins were divided at this time into the general categories of the heroic landscape, which included depictions of "extraordinary" ruins such as temples, pyramids, and antique graves, and the *parerga,* also known as the *style champêtre,* which were small paintings of wild and simple nature. While the heroic landscape turned on grand ideas toward the ends of cultivation, the *parerga* were thought to appeal to the pure emotions. In the hundreds of eighteenth-century paintings of ruins one finds interpretations of the concepts of beauty and nature that form a visual analogue to the philosophical debates of the period concerning empiricism, rationalism, and sensualism, or the role of understanding, reason, fantasy, and feeling in experiencing and knowing the world.[42]

A variant on the category of the heroic landscape is Giovanni Paolo Pannini's veduta of 1759, *Gallery of Views of Roman Antiquity* (fig. 5). Pannini, the best-known contemporary painter of this genre in Rome, executed innumerable canvases featuring Roman architecture and ruins. Large composite paintings such as *Gallery of Views of Roman Antiquity,* which measures over seven by nine feet, were intended for wealthy tourists, while engravings of the paintings were available for those of more modest income.[43] In Pannini's painted gallery an extensive, "heroic" landscape is brought indoors and compressed into an intensive, vir-



4. Antonio Chichi, *Temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli,* cork model. Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt.

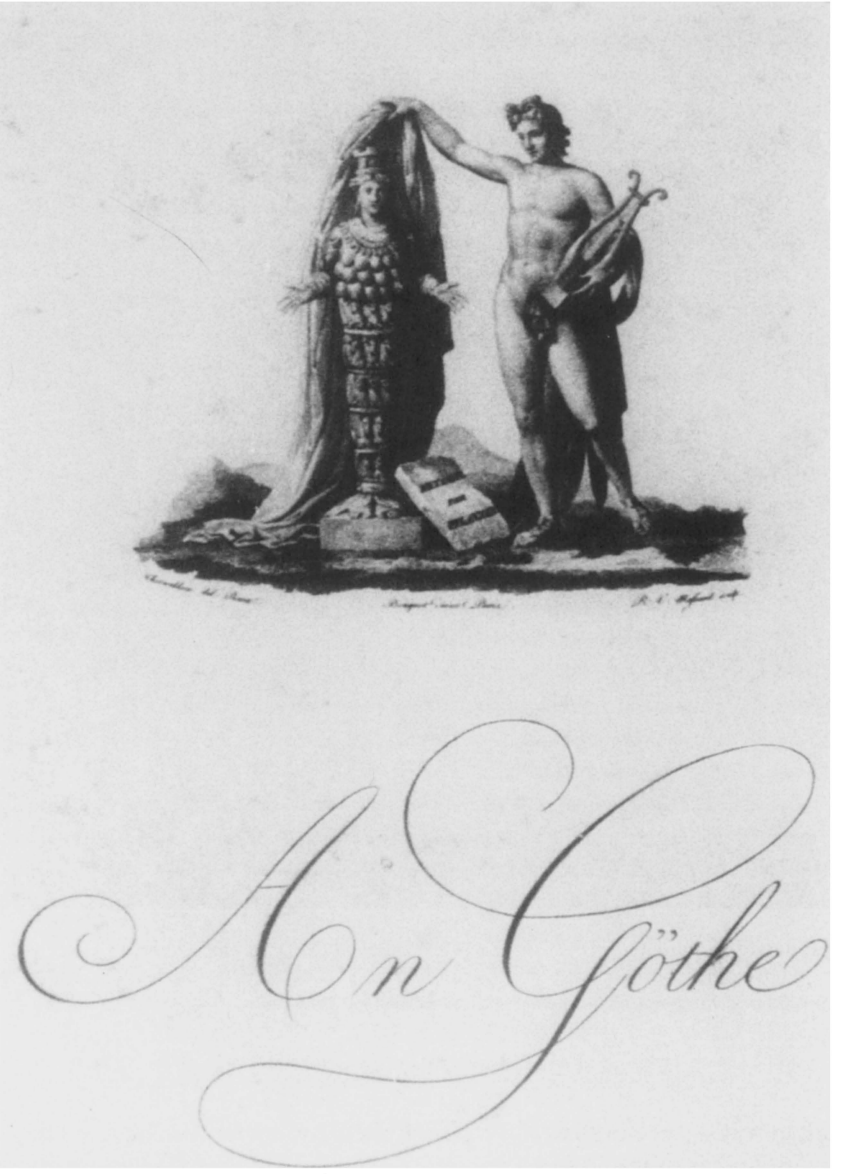
5. Giovanni Paolo Pannini, *Gallery Views of Roman Antiquity*, 1759, oil on canvas. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photograph by Rene-Gabriel Ojeda.

tual chamber of Roman antiquity. Here the heavy curtains are drawn aside to reveal a crammed space, one covered from floor to ceiling with paintings of architectural ruins, including at the upper left the Temple of the Sibyl modeled by Chichi, as well as sculptures, sarcophagi, and vases. As the gender of the human figures in the painting makes manifest, this is a site of male pleasure. Women, absent from the illustrated world of male collector and dilettante in Pannini's painting, are present only in the symbolic realm, making their appearance predominately in the guise of allegorical statuary and relief.[44]

Tucked away in a sarcophagus on the right-hand side of the canvas, beneath an imposing statue of Silenus with the Child Dionysus currently attributed to Lysippus, is a relatively small painting of a statue of Diana of Ephesus (fig. 6). The painting most probably refers to the statue in the temple dedicated to the goddess on the Aventine in Rome, which was founded by the king Servius Tullius in the fourth century B.C. The so-

6. Detail of Pannini, *Gallery Views of Roman Antiquity* (fig. 5). At bottom center in the sarcophagus, partly obscured, is a painting of Diana of Ephesus. Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY. Photograph by Rene-Gabriel Ojeda.

called veiled goddess was often equated by ancient writers with the Egyptian Isis or the Greek Artemis, and by more modern writers with the personification of nature.[45] The statue of Diana depicted in Pannini's veduta is modeled on the Ephesian type of the goddess, recognizable by the breasts that cover her torso and the tapering and encased cylindrical form of her lower body (see fig. 7). She is, in this instance, flanked on either side by hind, animals that refer to her role as the goddess of woodland and wild nature.




7. Raphael Urbain Massard, engraving after Bertel Thorwaldsen, *Apollo Unveiling the Diana of Ephesus.* Frontispiece to Alexander von Humboldt, *Ideen zur einer Geographie der Pflanzen* (Tübingen, 1807). Stiftung Weimarer Klassik und Kunstsammlungen Museen, Photograph by Sigrid Geske.

Upstaged as she is by the predominant compositional weight given to architectural ruins on Pannini's canvas, the Diana of Ephesus nevertheless plays an important epistemological role for the astute beholder. As Stuart Harten has observed, the veiled goddess enjoyed a certain popularity at this time because she symbolized a pressing philosophical problem concerning the nature of truth: namely, whether human reason was able to grasp an idealized truth, whether it was capable of "seeing" the truth behind the veil of sensory appearance.[46] Kant exposed his own fascination with the goddess when he claimed in the *Critique of Judgment,* "Perhaps nothing more sublime was ever said and no sublimer thought ever expressed than the famous inscription on the Temple of Isis (Mother Nature): 'I am all that is and that was and that shall be, and no mortal hath lifted my veil.'"[47] In his analytic of the sublime, Kant equates the veiled goddess with the *Ding an sich,* or the thing in itself. For just as no mortal had lifted the veil of the goddess to reveal her secret, so, analogously, can no mortal know the *Ding an sich,* or what lies beyond the limits of reason.

In addition to what Kant refers to as a "suggestive vignette" on the title page of J. A. de Segner's *Einleitung in die Natur-Lehre* of 1754, the image of the unveiling of the goddess was also used as a frontispiece for treatises on the flora and fauna of nature. An interesting example of the latter is a drawing by Bertel Thorwaldsen of the unveiling of a statue of Diana of Ephesus by her twin brother, Apollo, which serves as the dedication page, to Goethe, of Alexander von Humboldt's *Ideen zur einer Geographie der Pflanzen* (fig. 7). As Humboldt explains in a letter to Goethe, the frontispiece alludes to a unity of the poetic arts, philosophy, and biology.[48] The poetic arts are represented in the drawing by the figure of Apollo, while philosophy is symbolized by the figure of the Diana of Ephesus and biology by the subject of the book itself. A tablet bearing *The Metamorphosis of Plants,* the title of Goethe's famous meditation on the primal plant (*die Urpflanze*), rests on the base of the statue of the goddess. From this dedication page we therefore learn that, like Goethe, Humboldt believed in the unity of the arts and sciences. Moreover, while his *Geography of Plants* rests on Goethe's earlier writings on the primal plant, his own study of the plants of the tropics will reveal more about the origins and mysteries of nature's appearances for the reader.[49]

In these frontispiece illustrations, then, a claim is being made for an analogous revelation: just as the statue is being unveiled on the frontispiece, so shall the content of the respective book reveal the secrets of nature for the reader. Such claims demonstrate the epistemological and scientific hubris of the late eighteenth century, a time when it was felt that nature could be entirely known and classified. By designating something that cannot be known, Kant's *Ding an sich,* the noumenon in an otherwise

phenomenal world, diverges from such claims for complete knowledge. Yet I would argue that the *Ding an sich* actually functions in Kantian systematics in the same way as the a priori: The *Ding an sich* allows the subject to understand the world even though the subject can never know it. We might therefore say that although the *Ding an sich* points to an inaccessible knowledge, as a structural element in Kantian systematics, it nevertheless facilitates intellectual mastery.

A literal and metaphorical frame within the frame of Pannini's painting, the veiled goddess provides us with a small but telling *aperçu,* or whisper of the sublime. While the triumph of human knowledge over the remains of the past may serve as a suitable subtitle to Pannini's canvas of diligent male dilettantes and their objects of study, the painting of the Diana of Ephesus symbolizes a truth that can never be known. For Pannini's dilettantes, who strive to know or collect the past, and therefore to have it for themselves, nature's secrets represent a potential source of anxiety and emasculation.[50]

The desire for mastery and the threat of emasculation witnessed through the statue of Diana of Ephesus was often played out by Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers during the age of sensibility. While mastery could be obtained through knowledge or rational detachment, emasculation was found in an inability to gain knowledge and in an excess of feeling. Kant's own precritical work of 1764, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime,* may be read as a primer of appropriately gendered moral sensibility, stable virtues that would ease mastery, ward off emasculation, or simply relegate emotion to a fixed and proper place. While women, Kant notes, are creatures of the beautiful, men possess noble sentiments worthy of the name sublime. Thus, a "woman who has a head full of Greek, like Mme Dacier, or carries on fundamental controversies about mechanics, like the marquise du Châtelet, might as well have a beard; for perhaps that would express more obviously the mien of profundity for which she strives."[51] And its pendant: "A man must never weep other than magnanimous tears. Those he sheds in pain or over circumstances of fortune make him contemptible."[52] Kant's reference to the suspiciously "noble" intellectual virtues of Mme Dacier and the marquise de Châtelet not only illustrates their gender transgressions but also points to artificial, and consequently threateningly illegible, French codes of virtue and civility. In his text Kant opposes such "adoptive virtues," motivated merely by the "gloss of virtue," to the "genuine" and noble masculine virtues. For Kant, it goes without saying, the ideal subject is perforce male.[53]

The figure of Goethe represents a useful site through which to explore

further the constitution of the eighteenth-century subject, a brief excursus that will also tell us something about the contemporaneous role of ruins. Beginning with a scene from Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities*, of 1809, let us join Eduard and Charlotte, members of the landed nobility, on a walk amid the vast expanse of their cultivated grounds. After Eduard urges his wife to "take the shortest way back," the couple find themselves on a little-traveled path through the churchyard. On seeing Charlotte's renovation of the old graveyard for the first time, Goethe writes, Eduard was

> very surprised when he discovered that here too Charlotte had provided for the demands of sensibility. With every consideration for the ancient monuments she had managed to level and arrange everything in such a way as to create a pleasant place which was nice to look at and which set the imagination working. . . . Eduard felt very moved when, entering through the little gateway, he saw the place. He pressed Charlotte's hand and tears came into his eyes.[54]

While this passage certainly bears the lugubrious traces of the age of sensibility, it nevertheless outlines how old monuments could stir the imagination and emotions of the beholder. For Eduard, the sight of the aged tombstones was poignant enough to move him to tears.

Turning now from this passage penned by Goethe to a painted portrait of the man himself, we encounter a much different response to the sight of ancient monuments. In *Goethe in the Roman Campagna,* Wilhelm Tischbein's well-known portrait of 1787, we find Goethe not so much stirred by as comfortably ensconced in the landscape of antiquity (fig. 8). Tischbein's painting is a carefully crafted image of the celebrated "wanderer" resting languidly on a toppled obelisk amid the *disjecta membra* of ancient history. As Tischbein notes in a letter to Lavater, Goethe here stares off to the right "and reflects upon the fate of human works."[55] The foreground and background of the receding Roman campagna are separated in the painting by a horizon line of Goethe's favorite antique remains from the Via Appia, including the sepulchral monument of Caecilia Metella at the center of the canvas.[56]

The high classical bas-relief in the right foreground of the painting depicts the recognition scene between Iphigenia and Orestes, a motif of friendship taken up by the Romantics. Green ivy, representing immortality, winds around the decaying relief, indicating how the antique is being brought to life again by the poet Goethe. In this setting the larger than life-size figure of Goethe takes on a heroic cast, as Tischbein portrays him

8. Wilhelm Tischbein, *Goethe in the Roman Campagna,* 1787, oil on canvas. Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt am Main.

as the latest in a long and venerable line of cultural icons. Goethe's self-advertisement becomes all the more hyperbolic when measured against Ensor's more ironic and decidedly self-effacing portrait of 1888 (fig. 2).

The emotional response to the "ancient monuments" in the scene from Goethe's novella and the more detached, intellectual approach to the remains of antiquity captured in Tischbein's painting outline two divergent reactions to ruins. Whereas an "elective affinity" conjoined the emotions invoked by the sight of the "ancient monuments" in the old graveyard and Eduard's response to the scene in the novella, Goethe's emotional relation to the ruins of antiquity in Tischbein's painting may be described as nothing more proximate than a cool, historical detachment. Or, to put it somewhat differently, while it is the age value of the "ancient monuments" that appealed to the senses and "set the imagina-

tion working" in the case of the lachrymose Eduard, in Tischbein's rendering of *Goethe in the Roman Campagna,* it is the historical value of the toppled totems as signs of the lost greatness of antique civilizations that appeals to the intellect and takes precedence in perception.[57] Like Pannini's *Gallery of Views of Roman Antiquity,* Tischbein's painting is, among other things, an exercise for the intellect of the cultivated beholder, who is invited to identify the Greek relief, the Roman capital, indeed, the entire purview of antiquity assembled in the painting for our viewing pleasure.

The dialectical *topoi* of the "wanderer" and "the hut" in Goethe's literary works offer a corollary to the emotional and intellectual responses to ruins found in the novella and in the portrait by Tischbein.[58] The "wanderer," led hither and thither by natural instinct and emotional inclination, is continually at odds with the seeker of "the hut," the man who cultivates reason over instinct in the creation of society. Goethe, who framed a literature around the dialectic of emotion and reason in the figure of the wanderer and the need for the hut, even memorialized the continual struggle between steadfast virtues and restless desires in his stone altar to Agathe Tyche, a smiling goddess Fortuna, of 1777 (fig. 9).[59] Placed beside his garden house in Weimar, the altar is composed of a stone cube symbolizing the steady virtues, on top of which is placed the unsteady sphere of desires. Goethe's simple monument draws on a long iconographic tradition, one that likewise extends into the present day. The persistent use of the cube and the sphere in the history of art, and their symbolism as captured by Goethe in his garden monument, have led one commentator to query whether they might not, in fact, serve as a fundamental concept of the visual language of art.[60]

While Goethe had praised Kant for releasing the concept of morality from its equation with mere happiness, and in so doing for bringing us "all back from the effeminacy in which we were wallowing," he nevertheless recognized that morality and reason could never be entirely divorced from the force of desires.[61] The Goethean subject, who wavers between emotion and reason, wanders down a tortuous path throughout the course of his fictional life. The Kantian subject, on the other hand, guided by the moral law as a regulative principle, follows a path of freedom to its end. Kant's philosophy of history admits of an initial period of instinctual life, yet once his subject of history enters "the hut" of reason, he jettisons his wanderings, and represses his instincts, for the greater moral goal.[62]

Kant recognized that nature held her secrets, even naming these the *Ding an sich,* yet he was "always the philosopher of the a priori." To continue with the words of Ernst Cassirer, for Kant "a priori knowledge dis-

9. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Altar to Agathe Tyche,* 1777, stone. In the park of Goethe's garden house, Weimar. Stiftung Weimarer Klassik und Kunstsammlungen Museen.

closed no distinctive and independent realm beyond experience. The a priori is rather a moment in the structure of empirical knowledge itself; it is bound to experience in its significance and use."[63] Just as Kant himself had sought to master feeling, so had his philosophy offered a counterweight to any potential threat of emasculation. The transcendental laws and the a priori offered the mind a sure footing in the world of experience. Whereas the sight of ruins had brought tears of emotion to Eduard's eyes, Kant fixed his gaze on "the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me," and it was from this elevated bearing that he com-

posed a critique of judgment in which both ruins and pure feelings would find no place.

## Cool Idols

Such heavy traffic in ruins at the end of the eighteenth century makes it all the more striking that Kant does not mention ruins as occasions for aesthetic experience in the *Critique of Judgment.* We may come closer to understanding the absence of ruins from Kant's philosophical enterprise when we remember that the Kantian subject is none other than the *Weltbaumeister,* the architect of a moral world, the subject who possesses a priori knowledge and exercises it in forming a world of understanding. In his *Critique of Judgment,* Kant specifically defines the beautiful as a symbol of morality.[64] Yet Kant's conception of the sublime might also be associated with this moral theory. In the experience of the sublime, the subject discovers ideas of "a higher purposiveness" that are associated with the faculty of reason and defined as universal. The importance of the moral law and ideas of "a higher purposiveness" underscore how the Kantian subject is defined in orientation to the good.[65] In what follows I will demonstrate the way in which the orientation to the good in the Kantian sublime places the subject in a community of other reasoning subjects, as well as above internal and external nature.

In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant describes how the final end of nature can only be human culture. By human culture, he means not necessarily the "culture of skill" but rather the "culture of discipline," which "consists in the freeing of the will from the despotism of desires."[66] In this "freeing of the will," the subject acquires a moral dimension. In doing so, the subject trades a lawless freedom, one ruled by the instincts and senses, for a freedom under the moral law. For Kant, culture is therefore part of the freedom of the moral order and can occur only within society. That the aesthetic plays a special role in the development of freedom is understood. This is most concisely expressed by Kant in an essay of 1786, "Conjectural Beginning of Human History," when he remarks: "Natural impulse interferes with culture until such time as finally art will be strong and perfect enough to become a second nature. This indeed is the ultimate moral end of the human species."[67] When art finally becomes a second nature, then morality will become one as well, and so "the ultimate end of human species" will be attained.

While Kant's future-oriented concern with moral perfectibility would seem to offer one clear reason for his disregard of decay, ruins nonethe-

less appear as noteworthy candidates for inclusion in the analytic of the sublime. For Kant, the beautiful and the sublime are no longer the preserve of the senses but the result of judgment, a faculty of mind that imposes form on the manifold of sensation.[68] In analyzing the aesthetic experience Kant is therefore not so much concerned with aesthetic objects as with how we come to judge them. Aesthetic judgment, in turn, hinges not on the materiality of objects but on the play of perceptions known as "form." This form arises when the imagination and the understanding unify, or bring themselves to a self-determined order.[69] As we have seen, Kant contends that this ordering of the data of sensation by the mind proceeds according to transcendental principles, which is also to say that it occurs in a similar manner for every subject. If, as appetite, taste is individual and idiosyncratic, then as an aesthetic judgment taste is universal and consensual. Kant's claim for what he terms the "subjective universality" of the aesthetic judgment will be taken up in the subsequent section of this chapter.

Kantian aesthetic judgment is not only subjective and universal, it is also disinterested. Kant's notion of disinterestedness is often misconstrued. Disinterestedness means that one has no interest in the continued existence of the object.[70] The distinction, which also resonates in German semantics, between the physical and the conceptual grasp, or *greifen* and *begreifen,* might serve to illustrate this point most effectively. For Kant, it is not enough to not want to possess the object or to grasp it with the hand (*greifen*). Here the eye dominates the hand and renders it ineffectual. While the cognate roots of *greifen* and *begreifen* point to an etymological relation between the physical and the conceptual grasp, Kant separates and cancels this relation. According to the philosopher, the aesthetic object is grasped not by means of concepts of the physical object itself, but rather solely by the mental representation (*Darstellung*) that the object generates in the mind of the subject. In this way, aesthetic judgment is removed from the customary notion of grasping in a double sense—one physical, the other mental—and thus far removed from the world of objects. One of the paradoxes of aesthetic judgments is, then, that they are part of the cognitive faculty of the mind but they do not imply cognition, or knowledge.[71]

The detachment from the object opens up a space in the Kantian aesthetic experience for the imagination. Detachment is crucial since it is the workings of the imagination that provide the mental representation necessary for the aesthetic experience. Accordingly, there is no room for want or need of the object in Kantian systematics. Beginning in the eighteenth century, the aesthetic is marked off into a separate sphere directed toward a class of subjects who are not "hungry," who are capable at some mo-

ment of disavowing need.[72] We can agree with Richard Shusterman that Kant's definition of the aesthetic thereby introduces an element of "difference, distinction, and conventional prejudice" into a theory purporting to rest on "the idea of a natural uniformity of . . . response."[73]

Kant's notion of "purposiveness without a purpose" follows naturally here, and further serves to demarcate the aesthetic both from the world and the nonaesthetic. The object should be "purposive," that is, of such a lawfulness that it permits mental representation, or form, yet it must also be "without purpose."[74] Kant registers this distinction most clearly in a footnote that also provides the reader with an inkling of why art history will later part company with its disciplinary relative, anthropology:

> It might be objected to this explanation that there are things in which we see a purposive form without cognizing any purpose in them, like the stone implements often gotten from old sepulchral tumuli with a hole in them, as if for a handle. These, although they plainly indicate by their shape a purposiveness of which we do not know the purpose, are nevertheless not described as beautiful. . . . On the other hand a flower, e.g. a tulip, is regarded as beautiful, because in perceiving it we find a certain purposiveness which, in our judgment, is referred to no purpose at all.[75]

The aesthetic object may not be a means to an end existing external to it. It can only be a means unto itself, and as such fully self-sufficient and self-contained. Kant's *Critique* thus effects a separation of material culture and objects of aesthetic (read "high") culture through the very definition of the aesthetic itself, a definition predicated on an exclusion.[76]

The act of carnal renunciation instituted in the Kantian aesthetic experience contrasts sharply with the very sensual pleasures of fetishism. William Pietz notes that the original theory of fetishism was also a product of the Enlightenment:

> Both aesthetics and fetishism marked philosophical attempts to theorize certain subjective processes and creedal effects specific to the perceiving mind's direct relation to "sensuous materiality," a dimension of human experience inadequately accounted for by the established rational psychologies derived from René Descartes and John Locke. . . . The common view of European intellectuals of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was that primitive fetishes were the exemplary cultural artifacts of the most unenlightened spirits and the least civilized societies, those remaining frozen in a historyless stasis before the threshold of true religious understanding and self-conscious aesthetic judgment.[77]

While the efficacy of the "primitive" fetish turns on a fusion, whether mental or physical, of subject and object, as well as a certain intentionality or endowment of supernatural powers, the Kantian aesthetic experience is predicated on a strict detachment from the object. Kant's third *Critique* can be said to describe a more advanced stage of human culture—one, we might say, of cool idols—while also offering "a solution to the problem of fetishism."[78] On this account, the Kantian approach to the object may also be considered a forerunner to modernist theories of art premised on the "pure" opticality of a disinterested pleasure.[79]

In the sublime Kant offers a relation to sensuous materiality that is both detached and inherently rational. In the experience of fetishism, it is the object that has power over the mind of the subject. In the Kantian sublime, it is the mind of the subject that is superior to itself and to the world of objects. In this sense, the experience of fetishism and of the sublime mark out two distinct modes of thought, namely, mythical thought and scientific thought.[80] Kant's mode of thought negotiates the world through experience (*Erfahrung*) and partakes of the common Enlightenment currency of the supremacy of reason as the defining feature of humankind. In attempting to translate the "inexpressible" into an "objective, describable *something*," Kant's analytic of the sublime also participates in efforts toward making the sublime classifiable, or the object of a kind of scientific discourse.[81] For Kant, however, making the sublime part of an "objective" experience was not the final goal. Rather, the detachment of the subject from the object in the experience of the sublime—a posture that apes so-called scientific objectivity—is a bearing that facilitates the discovery of "a higher purposiveness," the ultimate purpose of the sublime in Kantian systematics.[82]

The sublime holds pride of place in Kantian aesthetics. Whereas we can say that a natural object is beautiful, or fully presented as form, the sublime is occasioned by a "formless object," yet one whose "totality is also present to thought."[83] Kant writes that, strictly speaking, we cannot call an object of nature sublime.

> All we can say is that the object is fit for the presentation of a sublimity which can be found in the mind. For the sublime, properly speaking, cannot be contained in any sensuous form. The sublime concerns only ideas of reason which, although no adequate presentation of them is possible, may be excited and called into the mind by that very inadequacy which admits of sensuous presentation. . . . [In the sublime] the mind has been incited to abandon sensibility and to busy itself with ideas that involve a higher purposiveness.[84]

The sublime may be occasioned by a "formless object" because this object leads us to discover not the purposiveness of nature, or empirical reality, but rather "a higher purposiveness," one residing in the subject itself.

As an "earnest exercise of the imagination," the sublime permits the mind to go beyond the limits of sensibility. In the sublime, Kant writes, reason "exercises its domination over sensibility," or imagination. Consequently, the experience of the sublime generates not the pure pleasure of the beautiful but the feeling of "negative pleasure" Kant calls "admiration or respect" (83). It is in this sacrifice of imagination that we discover ideas of reason existing in our own minds, and so "become conscious of our superiority to nature within us, and therefore also to nature outside us (insofar as it has influence upon us)."[85] Indeed, our "use" of the sublime produces "in us a feeling of purposiveness quite independent of nature."[86] In the experience of the sublime, then, the subject discovers not so much his independence of nature as his power and purposiveness over and above nature.[87]

The sublime is that which alone is *"absolutely great"* or *"great beyond all comparison"* (86). What qualifies as sublime in Kant's account is not any natural object but rather the feeling of the subject. In Kant's words, "the feeling for the sublime in nature is respect for our own destination, which, by a certain subreption, we attribute to an object of nature (conversion of respect for the idea of humanity in our own subject into respect for the object)" (96). In the sublime we *use* nature, or empirical reality, to discover "our own destination," to find our own "higher purposiveness," which, as "absolutely great," exceeds internal and external nature. That the domination of a totalizing reason in the sublime also entails a certain sacrifice of internal and external nature has been pointed out by subsequent philosophers, including Martin Heidegger, Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Hannah Arendt.[88] In the case of the Kantian sublime, however, the "sacrifice exacted from the sensible self is richly compensated by the renewed awareness of the subject's preeminence over nature."[89]

Unlike the affinity between mind and nature that is part of the analytic of the beautiful, in the sublime the analogy between mind and nature is made only to be broken. Whereas the mind rests in contemplation of the beautiful object, Kant writes that the mind "feels itself *moved* in the representation of the sublime in nature." This movement of the reflective judgment begins when the imagination is confronted with an object for which it feels itself incommensurable. Kant describes this point of excess for the imagination as "an abyss in which it fears to lose itself" (97). Yet this abyss incites not fear so much as a voluptuous terror, for despite the

imagination's failure to comprehend the sublime as a whole, the mind finds a principle by which to apprehend it. This principle is a law of reason. The subject then takes pleasure in finding a law for something that initially overpowered the imagination.

Kant distinguishes between the mathematical sublime and the dynamic sublime. Both of these movements of the sublime involve the reflective judgment. In contrast to the determinant judgment, which subsumes the particular under a given universal, the reflective judgment "is obliged to ascend from the particular in nature to the universal."[90] Since, as a transcendental principle, the "reflective judgment can only give as a law from and to itself" (16), the reflective judgment turns back on itself, rather than on nature. When the subject is faced in the experience of the sublime with something that eludes comprehension, he consequently treats the object as if it were purposive, as if it were a product of a mind with understanding like his own. In this way, the aesthetic judgment projects its own activity of determination on an object that eludes its grasp. The representation is therefore treated as past—as the product of an understanding—and yet in the suspended space of the aesthetic judgment, this representation is in reality yet to come: the reflective judgment must reflect, or turn back on itself, in the face of the initially inexplicable.[91]

In the experience of the sublime, it is not the size or quality of the object that is ultimately important, but rather the mind's apprehension of it.[92] While Kant asserts that the sublime can be found only in the mind of the subject, in his analysis of the mathematical sublime he offers two monumental human constructions of stone: the Egyptian pyramids and St. Peter's in Rome. In the case of the pyramids, Kant writes that one must be neither too near nor "too far from them, in order to get the full emotional effect from their size." This careful positioning—neither too near nor too far off—is necessary to evoke the "vibration" between attraction and repulsion that issues forth when the imagination cannot initially comprehend an object. The spectator entering St. Peter's in Rome is likewise thrown into a state of "bewilderment" or "perplexity." Because of the sheer vastness of the interior, "there is here a feeling of the inadequacy of his imagination for presenting the ideas of a whole." In these experiences of the mathematical sublime, it is reason that provides the imagination with the measure of absolute magnitude. In doing so, reason offers to the imagination the totality that could not be initially comprehended. In Kant's colossal examples, that which initially overwhelmed the physical eye is therefore tamed by the mind's eye, as nature is made comprehensible by a totalizing reason.

After discussing the pyramids and St. Peter's in Rome, Kant returns again to nature in his discussion of the sublime: "we must not exhibit the

sublime in products of art (e.g. buildings, pillars, etc.) where human purpose determines the form as well as the size, nor yet in things of nature *the concepts of which bring with them a definite purpose* (e.g. animals with a known natural destination), but in rude nature (and in this only in so far as it does not bring with it any charm or emotion produced by actual danger) merely as containing magnitude."[93] While Kant offers the pyramids and St. Peter's in Rome as occasions of the sublime in nature, he nonetheless saves his true praise for "rude nature." Unlike his two examples, in "nature's chaos, disorder and desolation" there exists no purpose of the object to distract the beholder. Hence, "rude nature" offers the opportunity for a pure judgment of the sublime.

To this end, the ruin appears a much more likely candidate as an occasion for the sublime than do the pyramids or St. Peter's in Rome. While the sheer size of these monuments may catalyze the movement of the mathematical sublime, they nevertheless remain bound up with human purpose. As opposed to the artificial ruin popular at this time, the natural ruin is a kind of "rude nature."[94] This class of ruins offers a monument lying in state, one whose purpose has been effaced by the continual exertion and immensity of the natural forces that have acted on it. In this sense, the ruin meets with Kant's insistence on the purposelessness of the aesthetic object. Unlike those two grandiose monuments mentioned by the philosopher, in ruins the achievements of human culture are undone.[95]

The absence of ruins from Kant's third *Critique* is especially notable in his account of the dynamic sublime. In this instance it is not a vastness that is initially incommensurable to the imagination but the limitless scope of nature's destructive capacities. In Kant's words, "If nature is to be judged by us as dynamically sublime, it must be represented as exciting fear." However, "he who fears can form no judgment about the sublime in nature, just as he who is seduced by inclination and appetite can form no judgment about the beautiful." Like the beautiful, the dynamic sublime is predicated on a Kantian detachment such that the fear aroused by the intimation of nature's might is not so much visceral as aesthetic.

Kant continues on a dramatic note:

> Bold, overhanging, and as it were threatening rocks; clouds piled up in the sky, moving with lightning flashes and thunder peals; volcanoes in all their violence of destruction; hurricanes with their track of devastation; the boundless ocean in a state of tumult; the lofty waterfall of a mighty river, and such like—these exhibit our faculty of resistance as insignificantly small in comparison with their might. But the sight of them is the more attractive, the more fearful it is, provided only that we are in security; and we

> willingly call these objects sublime, because they raise the energies of the soul above their accustomed height and discover in us a faculty of resistance of a quite different kind, which gives us courage to measure ourselves against the apparent almightiness of nature.
>
> Now, in the immensity of nature and in the insufficiency of our faculties to take in a standard proportionate to the aesthetical estimation of the magnitude of its *realm,* we find our own limitation, although at the same time in our rational faculty we find a different, nonsensuous standard, which has that infinity itself under it as a unity, in comparison with which everything in nature is small, and thus in our mind we find a superiority to nature even in its immensity. And so also the irresistibility of its might [*Macht*], while making us recognize our own physical impotence [*Ohnmacht*], considered as beings of nature, discloses to us a faculty of judging independently of and a superiority over nature, on which is based a kind of self-preservation [*Selbsterhaltung*] entirely different from that which can be attacked and brought into danger by external nature. Thus humanity [*Menschlichkeit*] in our person remains unhumiliated, though the individual might have to submit to this dominion [*Gewalt*]. . . . Therefore nature is here called sublime merely because it elevates the imagination to a presentation of those cases in which the mind can make felt the proper sublimity of its destination, in comparison with nature itself.[96]

It is here that we find a distinct echo to the conclusion of the second *Critique,* Kant's famous passage on "the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me." Like the mathematical sublime, the dynamic sublime awakens in the subject the supersensible faculty of reason, and with it a feeling of superiority over internal and external nature.

The *Haltung* of the subject, or the manner in which the self is performed in the sublime, is based on "a kind of self-preservation" (*Selbsterhaltung*) such that the subject is not only unhumiliated but rather elevated in his humanity. In order for the movement of the dynamic sublime to take place, the subject must be placed in a position of security. From this standpoint outside the scope of nature's power, the subject surveys the representation of the sublime in nature without itself ever being implicated in nature. During the course of the nineteenth century, this positioning of the beholder outside the scope of nature's power became a fixture in landscape paintings in which the observer of a precipitous waterfall, for instance, is commonly placed safely at the side of a scene of nature's might. In a similar way, images that turn on a mathematical sense of the sublime, such as Maxime du Camp's 1850 photograph of the colossus at Abu Simbal, make humankind into the measure of all things (fig. 10). While diminutive in stature relative to the colossus, the man in the photograph demonstrates, through the activities of surveying and mea-

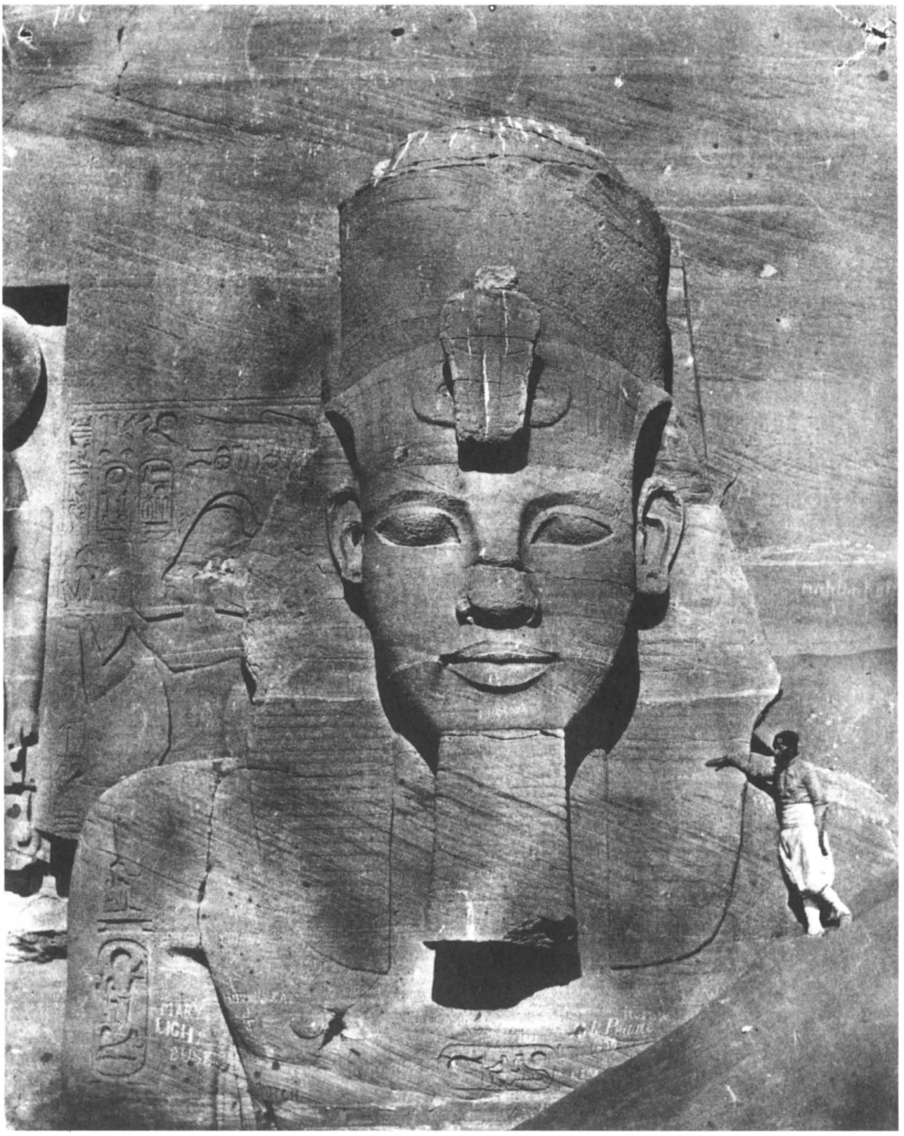
suring, that he has found a means by which to apprehend this occasion of the sublime in nature.

According to Kant's criteria, the ruin would also appear as a likely occasion for the dynamic sublime. While Kant's discussion of the dynamic sublime focuses exclusively on nature, it turns on a presentation of natural might. Displaying the scope and duration of the forces of nature that have acted upon it, the ruin presents a visual record of natural might. Yet unlike overhanging rocks, volcanoes, and other examples of natural extremes that potentially threaten the beholder, in the aesthetic experience of ruins the essential safety of the beholder is never really at issue.

Or is it? Like the examples of the dynamic sublime given in Kant's *Critique,* the ruin offers the beholder a position of physical safety in relation to it. Unlike Kant's examples, however, the ruin does not provide a secure conceptual position outside of it. When we consider how the natural forces at work on the ruin are the very ones that will eventually overtake the subject itself (fig. 2), we witness how the ruin implicates the subject in the life cycle of nature. In this sense, we may call the ruin an occasion of the sublime in nature, one that may initially overwhelm the subject sensitive to its warning of mortality.

As an "earnest exercise of the imagination," the sublime requires a higher culture than does the beautiful. For the "uneducated man," which is to say for one "without the development of moral ideas," the sublime is merely "terrible." For this man, the sublime arouses feelings of "misery, danger, and distress," as he finds himself simply overwhelmed by the intimation of nature's force rather than discovering himself superior to it. It follows, then, that the supremely sublime man, the one "who fears nothing, and therefore does not yield to danger, but rather goes to face it with complete deliberation," is the soldier.[97] As the example of the soldier further underscores, the experience of the Kantian sublime is one in which the subject does not suffer a mental failure of comprehension. Rather, the subject remains "unsubdued by danger," even when confronted by an emblem of his own mortality.

The aesthetic object is useful to Kant because it offers us a sensualization (*Versinnlichung*) of moral ideas such that we may see ourselves as independent of nature and thus free to determine ourselves by the law of reason; in the aesthetic experience of ruins we are confronted with our fate mirrored in traces of decay. The ruin offers a presentiment of freedom, yet it is not the freedom Kant finds in a subject bound by reason to unconditional laws so much as that of mortality, or complete release from the bonds of reason. Ruins—as emblem and as idea—threaten to topple the architectonic of the Kantian system by unseating reason from within. In the aesthetic experience of ruins the directing force of judgment, which



10. Maxime du Camp, Colossal Statue of Ramses II, 1850, photograph. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Robert O. Dougan Collection, Gift of Warner Communications Inc., 1981 (1981.1229.2). Photograph, all rights reserved, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

leads the subject from the concept of nature to that of Kantian freedom, is stopped short, as the relation of nature and culture in Kantian aesthetics is overturned. The ruin, though absent from the third *Critique,* underlies Kant's philosophy, where nature holds sway. On this account, it not surprising to learn that the ruin is the necessary—and necessarily excluded—other in Kantian systematics.[98]

The aesthetic, then, is ultimately useful to Kant not for the feelings conjured by the sight of the beautiful and the sublime but for the faculty of judgment the aesthetic experience inspires in the beholder. It is judgment, after all, that leads the subject from the realm of nature to that of "a higher purposiveness," making the aesthetic experience contingent upon the faculty of reason rather than upon the pure sensation of the faculty of sensibility. While the sublime is said initially to overwhelm the subject, the Kantian subject is never truly confronted by the possibility of his own ruin. On the contrary, the sublime, like the role of the moral law in Panofsky's vignette of the aged Kant, serves only to elevate the humanity of the subject. Rather than a lasting intimation of mortality, the "higher purposiveness" discovered through the aesthetic experience of the sublime brings with it a sense of self-mastery and superiority through the seemingly infinite capacities of human reason itself.

## The Judging Spectator

Kant's general emphasis on freedom and morality bears the traces of his time. The desire to create a reasonable and moral world was professed by many Germans, including an increasingly enlightened public that could no longer overlook an outmoded and corrupt system of government, including the despotic nature of rule, in the "grotesque monster" of "some more or less eighteen hundred independent territories" that constituted the contemporary fabric of the German land.[99] The success of the French Revolution served only to fan the desire in Germany for social equality and constitutional government. In her book *Life of Schiller,* Caroline von Schiller recounts how she and her philosopher husband "often remembered how the destruction of the Bastille, a monument of dark despotism, seemed to our youthful minds the herald of the victory of liberty over tyranny."[100] Other members of German enlightened society, however, did not conceive of revolution as a legitimate means toward the end of enlightened reform.

The desire for reform took two different directions at the end of the eighteenth century in Germany.[101] On the one hand, one encounters a Rousseauian longing for the freedom of return to an undifferentiated nat-

ural condition, a sentiment well captured in an etching by Charles Eisen, which serves as the frontispiece to the Abbé Laugier's *Essai sur l'architecture* of 1755 (fig. 11).[102] In this instance the way to freedom points clearly to the "primitive hut" of the past, rendering the architectural achievements of the subsequent centuries no more than mere debris to be cleared. On the other hand, one finds the notion that freedom means not a return to the past but a future goal predicated on a sense of human perfectibility.[103] While the more radical German revolutionaries tended to agree with Rousseau's vision, the majority of the German Enlightenment thinkers harbored monarchical sympathies; as a consequence, they dedicated their efforts toward slow reform along the lines of constitutional monarchy rather than toward immediate—and riotous—revolution. Stressing evolution over revolution in his political writings, Kant captured the logic of this kind of reform.

As a firm believer in enlightenment, Kant was influenced in his vision by force of historical circumstance. Living as a German subject under the "benevolent despot" Frederick the Great, Kant was confident in his meliorist vision of society. With the death in 1786 of Frederick the Great and the accession to the throne of the benighted monarch Frederick Wilhelm II, however, Kant witnessed a rise of repression and obscurantism. While this changing political tenor did not disturb the philosopher's belief in the historical progress of reason, it did cause him to embrace more fully the causes of enlightenment and republicanism.[104]

In his 1784 essay, "What Is Enlightenment?" Kant accords the scholar a primary role in the process of enlightenment. Kant tells us that the scholar, because he is not duty-bound to the statutes and formulas of a particular office, possesses complete freedom "to use his own reason and to speak in his own person" to his public, "the world" (this "world" being in actuality, of course, a circumscribed world of educated male subjects).[105] Precisely because of the complete freedom he possesses, the scholar is called on to criticize the institutions of religion and government, and in so doing to further enlightenment. Whereas in the aesthetic experience the concepts of nature and freedom are bridged by the faculty of judgment, a process which occurs within the subject himself, here it is the scholar who performs a bridging between two conceptual realms, those of the empirical world and the "ethical community," the ultimate end of moral freedom about which the scholar enlightens his public. The subject is, therefore, an important agent in both Kant's aesthetic theory and his philosophy of history.

Kant's description of the role of the scholar in the process of enlightenment provides important clues to the conception of the subject in his philosophy of history. Just as the sublime is useful to Kant because it leads

11. Charles Eisen, *Allegory of Architecture Returning to Its Natural Model*, engraving. Frontispiece to M. A. Laugier, *Essai sur l'architecture*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1753). Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

the subject to the higher faculty of reason, so the subject of Kant's philosophy of history is marked by a drive toward moral perfectibility. Believing republicanism the goal of moral society, Kant viewed the initial results of the French Revolution as the summit of freedom. Yet in his own philosophy of history, Kant offers the citizen no right of revolution.[106] Like the patriot in the title vignette of the *Patriotisches Archiv* (*Patriotic Archive*) of 1788, Kant advocates an exercise of "patient hope" while the work toward enlightenment of the scholars and "enlightened" despots brings the ship of freedom to the shores of the German land (fig. 12). If the sun, to follow Kant, is "the point of view of reason," then the patriot depicted here is a member of the *Volk,* a citizen deemed ill-equipped to effect change himself, and so one who must wait for the reason of those above him to illuminate his way.[107]

While Kant defined enlightenment as "the freedom to make public use of one's reason at every point," he did not confine freedom to the sphere of intellectual criticism. The philosopher also viewed "human actions" as the appearance of freedom of the will, and in this sense the French Revolution had special resonance for him.[108] For Kant, the French Revolution was a "historical sign," an event that enabled him "to conclude, as an inevitable consequence of its operation, that mankind is improving."[109] More specifically, the French Revolution was a sign of the human will reshaping the world in accordance with a moral ideal. Kant writes of the French Revolution in a passage that vividly captures his enthusiasm for it:

> The revolution which we have seen taking place in our times in a nation of gifted people may succeed, or it may fail. It may be so filled with misery and atrocities that no right-thinking man would ever decide to make the same experiment again at such a price, even if he could hope to carry it out successfully at the second attempt. But I maintain that this revolution has aroused in the hearts and desires of all spectators who are not themselves caught up in it a *sympathy* which borders almost on enthusiasm, although the very utterance of this sympathy was fraught with danger. It cannot therefore have been caused by anything other than a moral disposition within the human race.[110]

Like the patriot in the vignette, the subject of this world-historical event is not an active participant but an inactive spectator. Since "the very utterance" of sympathy for the French Revolution was "fraught with danger," this onlooker is relegated to the role of judge, demonstrating enthusiasm solely through a disinterested regard. As in Kant's critique of aesthetic judgment, a detached bearing—a clear sign of the ascendancy

12. Egidius Verhelst, title vignette for the *Patriotisches Archiv für Deutschland* (Leipzig, 1788). Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, NY.

of the reason of the subject—is here viewed as the sign of a moral character.[111]

While Kant heartily sympathized with the initial results of the French Revolution, in his political writings he repeatedly, and rather paradoxically, stressed how revolution "is at all times unjust."[112] When considered ex post facto, the French Revolution may be a "historical sign," or sign of progress, yet the philosopher does not condone it a priori. Kant makes a distinction between theory and practice, offering his support to the idea, rather than to the practical events, of the French Revolution.[113] Such a distinction is commensurate with the superiority Kant accords the spectator over the participant: the judging spectator becomes the model, or archetype, by which all others are measured.[114] Kant's own participation in the

events of the French Revolution was that of a judging spectator, although one who, in this instance, expressed his sympathy in essays written for the sake of enlightenment.

It is the subject as judging spectator, or *Weltbetrachter,* that binds Kant's philosophy of history and his aesthetic theory. According to Kant, both aesthetic judgments and political judgments are disinterested and universal.[115] Indeed the Kantian subject/architect of a moral world, the *Weltbaumeister,* is none other than the world spectator, the *Weltbetrachter:* this architect is not so much a laborer as an intellectual planner, a subject of contemplative judgment rather than of physical action. In the *Critique of Judgment,* Kant defines the aesthetic attitude as both purely contemplative and subjectively universal. In making his claim for the universality of the aesthetic judgment, Kant presupposes a *sensus communis,* an internal sense common to all.[116]

In the analytic of the sublime Kant describes the three maxims of the *sensus communis:* "(1) to think for oneself; (2) to put ourselves in thought in the place of everyone else; (3) always to think consistently." The first, which refers to the faculty of the understanding, is the maxim of Enlightenment. According to Kant, only the process of thinking for oneself releases one from the "self-incurred tutelage" suppressing the unenlightened subject.[117] The second maxim relates to the faculty of judgment and offers the subject an "enlarged mentality." Kant informs us that "it indicates a man of enlarged thought if he disregards the subjective private conditions of his own judgment, by which so many others are confined, and reflects upon it from a *universal standpoint* (which he can only determine by placing himself at the standpoint of others)."[118] The universal standpoint assumed in judgment allows Kant to claim that while not all others *will* agree with the judgment of the subject, they *ought* to, for in making this judgment the subject has moved beyond self-interest by taking the viewpoint of others into account.[119] The universal standpoint is the impartial vantage point of the *Weltbetrachter,* of the world spectator.[120] The third, and final, maxim refers to the faculty of reason and is the most difficult to attain, for it involves the steadfast observation of the first two. Developing his reason enables the subject "always to think consistently," and in so doing to be at one with himself, by which Kant means at one with his own reason or "internal moral legislation."[121]

For Kant, however, it is not enough merely to adopt a universal standpoint in judgment. What is even more crucial is that one communicate one's judgment. As he writes:

> It is only in society that it occurs to him to be, not merely a man, but a refined man after his kind (the beginning of civilization). For such do we

> judge him to be who is both inclined and apt to communicate his pleasure to others and who is not contented with an object if he cannot feel satisfaction in it in common with others. Again, everyone expects and requires from everyone else this reference to universal communication of pleasure, as it were from an original compact dictated by humanity itself.[122]

The universal communicability of the aesthetic judgment acts as an original compact, binding subjects together in society through their role as judging spectators.[123]

What Kant terms in this instance the original compact is a judgment that defines humanity in sociability and binds it through taste. Because the aesthetic object is defined through the communication of it, the importance of the aesthetic object increases as the scope of its communicability widens.

> Thus, doubtless, in the beginning only those things which attracted the senses, e.g. colors for painting oneself (roucou among the Caribs and cinnabar among the Iroquois), flowers, mussel shells, beautiful feathers, etc.—but in time beautiful forms also (e.g. in their canoes, and clothes, etc.), which bring with them no gratification or satisfaction of enjoyment—were important in society and were combined with great interest. Until at last civilization, having reached its highest point, makes out of this almost the main business of refined inclination, and sensations are only regarded as of worth in so far as they can be universally communicated. Here, although the pleasure which everyone has in such an object is inconsiderable [that is, so long as he does not share it][124] and in itself without any marked interest, yet the idea of its universal communicability increases its worth in an almost infinite degree.[125]

While this sense is purportedly founded upon a *sensus communis*, an internal sense common to all, in the above passage Kant makes clear that it is not developed to the same degree in every subject. Writing from the vantage point of civilized society, and with a more highly evolved *sensus communis*, Kant charts a history of aesthetic judgment at the same time that he argues for the universality of the *sensus communis*. Because the aesthetic has its own history, aesthetic judgments never really take the viewpoint of all others into account. Rather, Kantian judgment considers only the viewpoint of subjects similarly defined, that is, only those with whom one can communicate. Those with whom one cannot communicate are, so it appears, either not considered at all or considered, yet distinguished from, the community of one's own aesthetic kin.[126]

Here it is useful to remember that Kant's third *Critique* was originally called *Critique of Taste*. Because the universal standpoint of judgment

takes the viewpoint of others into account, it involves a process in which egoism is overcome. And yet, historically speaking, taste has not been wholly disinterested; it has become normative through the passage of time. Instead of serving as a great leveler, Kantian judgment—the judgment of taste—becomes through time the great divider, as the aesthetic itself becomes a distinct sphere and a sphere of distinction.

In terms of the writing of history, Kant notes characteristically: "Only a learned public, which has lasted from its beginning to our own day, can certify ancient history. Outside it, everything else is terra incognita; and the history of peoples outside it can only be begun when they come into contact with it."[127] "Peoples outside" are, not surprisingly, those outside European civilization. To begin with, these peoples—the Caribs and the Iroquois among them—have no history before they come into contact with "civilized" society.[128] In addition, as the above passage demonstrates, they are characterized by a lower form of civilization, one in which "things which attracted the senses," or "in time beautiful forms also," constitute the aesthetic. While these societies may hold the beautiful as an aesthetic category, it would seem that they do not yet possess the sublime.

The subject of Kant's critical enterprise is not only reasonable, he is unabashedly European. If the purpose of Enlightenment is to release man from his "self-incurred tutelage," then no less than the likes of enlightened European man is to bring those existing outside European civilization into "history" through colonization. Kant does not acknowledge the patrimony of his subject. Rather, he declares him a "universal" subject, a *Weltbetrachter.* Kant's Eurocentrism, however, must be acknowledged so that we may ask, along with Tsenay Serequeberhan, "Whose humanity is at stake in Kant's writings?"[129] Kant's humanity embraces European citizens and especially values those with full control over their internal nature and the natural world. On the other hand, the humanity of non-European peoples is frequently negated in Kant's writings. The best Kant offers these "others" is the chance for humanity—and so for inclusion—through colonization.

If Kant contends that it is only in society that we can develop our morality, it follows that only in "civilized" society may we find the sublime. The judging spectator, that quintessentially enlightened subject, is also the subject of the sublime. Fully detached from the fray, the judging spectator uses solely the faculty of his own reason to understand and change the world.[130] Because this reasonable subject is not an actor but a spectator, his task is communication rather than direct action, and so judgment is his most important attribute. Judgment, defined as the faculty of reason working in society, is said to further the moral feeling of

the subject, and so to lead society toward the moral end. In this way, the idealized subject of aesthetic judgment merges with the Kantian subject of history, for both move toward the same goal over the *longue durée.*

For Kant, the work toward freedom and morality was primarily a philosophical or intellectual pursuit, although one that could and would, he believed, eventually effect change in society. In the German land of poets and thinkers he was celebrated for providing the "Copernican revolution" in philosophy, an intellectual revolution that Heinrich Heine esteemed as analogous to the material revolution in France.[131] Kant's subject of history may move closer to pure reason in the mental (*geistige*) realm, yet he is constrained—if not rendered impuissant—in the political realm. The destructive consequences of such a subject for German political history become all too apparent when we consider the Nazi architect Albert Speer's theory of ruin-value.[132] Speer purposely planned his buildings so that they would become picturesque ruins throughout the course of the thousand-year Reich, an act of hubris that assumed that the Germans citizens would not rise up and destroy these monuments of "dark despotism," as the French patriots had earlier done to the Bastille.[133]

## The Idealized Subject of Art History

Consider the Unfinished Temple of Philosophy at Ermenonville, modeled after the Temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli, and built by the marquis de Girardin in about 1775 (fig. 13).[134] A Latin inscription over the doorway to the temple, a quote from Virgil, urges those who enter "to understand the true nature of things." The unfinished state of the temple symbolizes such a pursuit of knowledge. Like this artificial ruin, which memorializes at once the fragmentary nature of life and thought as well as a hopeful idea of progress, Kant offers us an incomplete edifice of systematic thought in which the subject plays an essential role.[135] In his correspondence Kant exudes confidence about his philosophical enterprise: "The system of the *Critique* rests on a fully secured foundation," he writes, "established forever, it will be indispensable too for the noblest ends of mankind in all future ages."[136] While this might be true, "the clear fact is that by his own standards Kant never actually presented a 'complete' philosophy."[137] Indeed, Kant provides a philosophical system that is completely adequate yet incomplete. Rather than constructing cognitive objects of metaphysical imponderables, Kant turned his attention to the conditions of possibility of reason and so to the role of the judging spectator.

13. Unfinished Temple of Philosophy at Ermenonville, ca. 1775. Reproduced from Osvald Sirén, *China and the Gardens of Europe in the 18th Century* (New York, 1950). Courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Trustees for Harvard University, Washington, D.C.

It is the idealized subject who makes the passage between the worlds of nature and morality, and between understanding and freedom, and in so doing secures the architectonic of Kant's philosophical edifice. While Kant clearly champions an idealized subjectivity, he nonetheless indicates how nature and reason reside at the foundations of the subject. This being the case, if we peer deeper into the Kantian edifice, we may well find an unsteady architectonic construction.[138] We may discover that, contrary to what the philosopher claimed for them, aesthetic judgment and the subject of his philosophy of history offer not so much a bridge, or *Brücke,* as the figurative sense connoted in the German word *Brückenschlag,* a rope bridge thrown across a conceptual divide, allowing tenuous linkage from one side to another.[139] And yet, in Kant's philosophical enterprise it is assumed that an idealized subject will form a bridge rather than rely on a makeshift structure, thereby securing his philosophical edifice.

It is precisely this idealized, and mistaken, Kantian subject that is our inheritance in the discipline of art history. Our discipline hinges on cultivated "noble souls" who can feel and also describe, who are not simply disinterested but wholly detached from bodily experience. Like its Kantian counterpart, the judging spectator of art history—once aptly described as the connoisseur—is neither embodied nor temporal. The class connotations and European complexion of this reasonable humanist subject are obvious, though until very recently they have been left unspoken.[140]

If Kant laid out the conditions of possibility of judgment, Pierre Bourdieu has recently examined the social conditions of possibility of aesthetic judgment, as well as of an ahistorical essence, or pure aesthetic. While not naming him, Bourdieu captures the logic of the judgment of the connoisseur, a judgment that slides rather easily into normativity: "The pure thinker, by taking as the subject of his reflection his own experience—the experience of a cultured person from a certain social milieu—but without focusing on the historicity of his reflection and the historicity of the object to which it is applied (and by considering it a pure experience of the work of art), unwittingly establishes this singular experience as a transhistorical norm for every aesthetic perception."[141] While this humanist subject has always had a gender, he has historically been a reasonable rather than a carnal subject, one distinguished by the eye rather than the hand, by the intellect rather than the senses. As the aesthetic itself is predicated on a material exclusion, so the judging spectator of art history has historically been characterized through a bodily renunciation, one that has afforded ample space to the role of reason in aesthetic judgment.[142] As Bourdieu suggests, this pure thinker, unmoored from his own

historical position, ignores the historicity of the aesthetic object of his contemplation. The equation follows rather neatly: only a supposedly pure thinker may make a pure judgment of taste, a judgment, moreover, that may be construed as "transhistorical" in the same measure as the thinker himself may be conceived as "pure."

A mistakenly idealized notion of the Kantian subject has been fundamental to the discipline of art history. Recall the question posed by Panofsky in his 1940 essay "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline": "How, then, is it possible to build up art history as a respectable scholarly discipline, if its very objects come into being by an irrational and subjective process?"[143] The answer, so we learn, lies not only in the elevation of the status of the art object and in a sufficiently scientific practice for its study, but also in the importance accorded to the role of an idealized subject.[144] For the latter we may look back to Kant, who, at the end of the eighteenth century, provided the beginnings of a resolution to this dilemma by making beauty a symbol of morality and the experience of the sublime the discovery of a "higher purposiveness." Drained of any "irrationality," the aesthetic object, like the aesthetic experience, was used by Kant to further the discovery of an attitude of mind resembling the moral. Whereas I have argued that Kantian subjectivity rests on a dialectic of nature and reason, as we have seen the subject of Kantian aesthetic experience is none other than the judging spectator, a subject from whom all undercurrents of "irrationality" have been suppressed.

It is through the mechanisms of disciplinarity and institutionalization that a mistakenly idealized Kantian subject has generalized and congealed into the idealized Kantian subject of the discipline of art history. The idealized subject of art history is no longer the single producer or consumer of art, but what Bourdieu aptly describes as "the entire set of agents engaged in the field."[145] The idealized subject of art history is not so much a person as a framework, one within which and by which judgments are made in the history of art and on the objects of its study. Like its Kantian counterpart, the idealized subject of art history is inherently rational: serving as a normative framework, this "subject" also claims a judgment that is both disinterested and universal.[146]

We would do well to keep in mind, however, that the Kantian subject is one divided between nature and morality, understanding and reason. Yet, as Kant would have it, reason and morality, those favored realms and necessary endpoints, constitute the "freedom" of the subject of his aesthetic theory and philosophy of history. The totalizing nature of this bias toward reason—of this trajectory toward freedom defined in and through reason—has worked historically to foreclose other aspects of the subject in advance. The idealized Kantian subject is a self overcome,

a subject subjected to the kind of self-mastery necessary for disinterested, "objective" evaluation.[147] If the contours of this subject are clearly bounded, an unidealized subject becomes one marked by what Charles Taylor has described as a more richly varied "topography of the self."[148]

Although Kant fixed his subject in reason and morality, Kantian experience is predicated on one's being in the world. If reason serves the subject as an imaginary focus, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant suggests that theory begins with looking at the starry skies. In focusing on an idealized Kantian subject, the discipline of art history has found the Kant it has sought—the version of Kant's philosophy that charts the move from nature to reason, and, with it, the transition from the empirical to the objective to the transcendental point of view. This idealized version of Kant's philosophy provides the systematicity required for a discipline of art history.

In the first decades of the twentieth century Aby Warburg and Ernst Cassirer trace the movement of seeing, representing, and knowing in a theory of symbolic forms. In contrast to the idealized Kantian subject, the interrelation of subject and symbolic form in Warburg's theory defies an easy slide from nature to reason. In the following chapter we examine the movement and meaning of the symbolic form in the theories of Warburg and Cassirer and the implications of these theories for the history of art.

CHAPTER THREE

# *Goethe, Warburg, Cassirer*

## Symbolic Form as Orientation

There is no way of more surely avoiding the world than by art, and it is by art that you form the surest link with it.

GOETHE

Contemplation of the sky is the grace and curse of humanity.

ABY WARBURG

In a series of essays culminating in significant publications of the 1920s, Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) and Aby Warburg (1866–1929) defined the symbolic form. Symbolic forms such as myth, language, religion, art, and knowledge are the shaping of a world of experience at a given point in time. Symbolic forms not only reveal how the world is conceived according to an artist or a thinker, but, for Cassirer and Warburg, these forms also convey a common formative process that transcends time and place. Following Kant, Cassirer sought to determine how the mind creates a world of understanding. While Kant had discovered reason to be the "guiding thread" of a free subject, and the sublime to be a movement between sensuous experience and the idea of reason, Cassirer shifted Kant's theory of knowledge to a new, broader systematic philosophy that highlighted more than the role of reason.[1] In Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms,* "the critique of reason becomes the critique of culture."[2]

Cassirer describes the way his philosophy pursues and extends the analytical process that began with Kant's "Copernican revolution."

> Every authentic function of the human spirit has this decisive characteristic in common with cognition: it does not merely copy but rather embodies

> an original, formative power. It does not express passively the mere fact that something is present but contains an independent energy of the human spirit through which the simple presence of the phenomenon assumes a definite "meaning," a particular ideational content. This is as true of art as it is of cognition; it is as true of myth as of religion. All live in particular image-worlds, which do not merely reflect the empirically given, but which rather produce it in accordance with an independent principle. Each of these functions creates its own symbolic forms which, if not similar to the intellectual symbols, enjoy equal rank as products of the human spirit. None of these forms can simply be reduced to, or derived from, the others; each of them designates a particular approach, in which and through which it constitutes its own aspect of "reality."[3]

Turning from the study of cognition to the study of culture, Cassirer points the compass of critical inquiry to the meaning of symbolic forms as expressions of the human mind or spirit (*Geist*). Since symbolic forms "do not merely reflect the empirically given, but . . . rather produce it," Cassirer aims to determine the independent principle, or formative power, on which symbolic forms rest and rely. According to the philosopher, the symbolic form is the outcome of a dialectic of life and spirit, or, as he puts it variously, of expression and form. Just as life and spirit are here conceived together, so the form and content of the symbol are joined in Cassirer's philosophy. In this way, Cassirer offers a systematic philosophy in which the symbol is defined as more than a semiotic key or a playful allusion.

If "culture," as a "function of the human spirit," originates in humankind's emotional response to external stimuli, something Cassirer studies carefully in his writings on myth, culture reaches its zenith in mathematical thought, where humankind has devised its own symbolic systems in order to "explain" the natural world. As Cassirer makes clear, in his philosophy all symbolic forms "enjoy equal rank as products of the human spirit." Such a comment might appear odd coming from a philosophy of symbolic forms that traces a trajectory from mythical thought to scientific thought. When one understands Cassirer's accent on the function rather than on the substance of the symbolic form, however, then his seemingly hierarchical trajectory can be reconciled with a democratic point of view that considers all symbolic forms of equal rank. That is, while the substance of the symbolic forms of myth, language, religion, art, and knowledge may be unique, Cassirer argues that they all share a common function as ways in which the mind or spirit (*Geist*) orders perceptual and intellectual content.

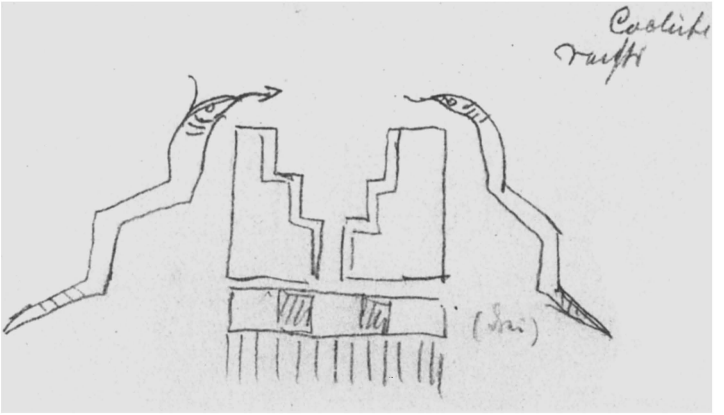
For Cassirer, humankind is an "animal symbolicum"—to be human is to have moved beyond the quick and simple patterns of response char-

acteristic of the animal world to a space that encompasses time for reflection.[4] The fabrication and use of tools may have enabled humankind to alter the world rather than merely to react to it; the creation of cultural forms may serve as vehicles of human expression. Be that as it may, humankind nevertheless remains a symbolic animal, part conceptual and part carnal.[5] Hence, the possibility of the loss of what Warburg terms realms of reason (*Denkräume der Besonnenheit*) is part of the incessant dialectic that marks the human condition. Cassirer captures the pathos of this dialectic well when, writing in his 1930 essay "Life and Spirit in Contemporary Philosophy," he cites the maxim of Goethe's that begins this chapter. If the human spirit strives to leave the world behind for its representation in cultural forms, Cassirer observes, then these very cultural forms are themselves responses to the world of human experience.[6] Tied to the world of sensuous experience yet striving to reach beyond it, the dialectic of life and spirit that drives the creation of culture is not unlike Kant's own understanding of experience.

In their own ways, the accounts of Thales and Kant show how theory begins with looking at the starry heavens. For Warburg, too, "contemplation of the sky is the grace and curse of humanity." Follow Warburg's 1923 lecture, "Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America," as he discusses the gravity and grace of humankind's actual and symbolic relation to the cosmos.

> In the representation of the evolution, ascents, and descents of nature, steps and ladders embody the primal experiences of humanity. They are the symbol for upward and downward struggle in space, just as the circle—the coiled serpent—is the symbol for the rhythm of time. Man, who no longer moves on four limbs but walks upright and is therefore in need of a prop in order to overcome gravity as he looks upward, invented the stair as a means to dignify what in relation to animals are his inferior gifts. Man, who learns to stand upright in his second year, perceives the felicity of the step because, as a creature that has to learn how to walk, he thereby receives the grace of holding his head aloft. Standing upright is the human act par excellence, the striving of the earthbound toward heaven, the uniquely symbolic act that gives to walking man the nobility of the erect and upward-turned head.

Relating his remarks to the cosmology of the Pueblo Indians, Warburg notes how the universe is conceived in the form of a house with a stair-shaped roof. In addition to actual stairs leading onto the rooftops of Pueblo dwellings and into the subterranean ceremonials spaces known as kivas, Warburg found an image of "the stair-shaped roof of the world-house" on an interior wall of the church at Ancoma. Bearing the traces of



14. Aby Warburg, drawing. Warburg Institute, London (WIA 040 020740).

a culture in transition, this church was also outfitted with a Spanish-inspired Baroque altar (figs. 14 and 15). If, as "primal experiences of humanity," stairs represent the striving of ascent or the descent of humankind, then in the cosmology of the Pueblo Indians the symbol of the serpent mediates between humankind and the cosmos. In Warburg's sketch the serpent, rendered with an arrowhead tongue, is the symbol for lightning; rain, associated with lightning as a desired weather condition in an arid region, is represented in short pencil strokes at the bottom of the drawing. Warburg remarks that the serpent, whether depicted outstretched as the symbol of lightning, coiled, or live and poisonous, "for the [Hopi]—as in all pagan religious practice . . . commands cultic devotion as the most vital symbol."[7]

"The snake," Warburg remarks at the closing of his 1923 lecture, "deserves its own chapter in the philosophy of 'as if.'"[8] The art historian had learned from his study of the Hopi snake dance that the passage of the serpent from actual animal to symbolic form is but one example of humankind's orientation to the world via the mediation of the symbol. As for Goethe (1749–1832), so for Warburg and Cassirer, the symbolic form is a means of orientation.[9] The creation of symbolic forms presupposes an orientation to the sensible world or to the world of ideas, while the understanding of the symbolic form requires a "definite, homogeneous intellectual orientation."[10] Goethe's, Warburg's, and Cassirer's conceptions of the oscillating nature of the symbol all allow for the movement from seeing to representing to knowing at the same time as they permit that

15. Aby Warburg, Interior of the Acoma Church of Laguna, photograph. Warburg Institute, London.

movement to occur in reverse. As a consequence, these theories raise questions regarding the role of the mind in creating a world of understanding and the possibility of a history of progress of symbolic forms.

In his efforts to conceptualize art history as a cultural science (*Kulturwissenschaft*), Warburg infused his writings with a host of concerns that are not simply interdisciplinary, as has so often been claimed for him, but are also philosophical in nature.[11] Since Warburg's method asks us to move from the analysis of a history of facts to a study of meaning, we might ask how we can assume "meaning" in the first place and how we might come to know this meaning historically. From a philosophical register, this chapter will ask the epistemological question of how we construct knowledge by addressing the relation of the symbolic form to (art) history. Whereas traditional history writing is predicated on a temporal break with the past, Warburg's understanding of the symbol at once permits and denies the distance between past and present. Can Warburg's theory of the symbol be incorporated into a traditional history of art, a history in which accounts of artistic and stylistic development play a pivotal role? As we shall see, asking whether Warburg's theory of the sym-

bol can be reconciled with a traditional art history poses, in turn, a question about the power of the symbol in the history of art.

Cassirer came into contact with the Warburg Library soon after he accepted the chair in philosophy at the newly founded University of Hamburg in 1920. Fritz Saxl, who was in charge of the library at that time, "showed Cassirer around." "He was a gracious visitor," Saxl recalls,

> who listened attentively as I explained to him Warburg's intentions in placing books on philosophy next to books on astrology, magic, and folklore, and in linking the sections on art with those on literature, religion, and philosophy. The study of philosophy was for Warburg inseparable from that of the so-called primitive mind: neither could be isolated from the study of imagery in religion, literature, and art. These ideas had found expression in the unorthodox arrangement of the books on the shelves.
>
> Cassirer understood at once. Yet, when he was ready to leave, he said, in the kind and clear manner so typical of him: "This library is dangerous. I shall either have to avoid it altogether or imprison myself here for years. The philosophical problems involved are close to my own, but the concrete historical material which Warburg has collected is overwhelming."[12]

"In one hour," Saxl declares, "this man had understood more of the essential ideas embodied in that library than anybody I had met before."

Warburg himself at this time was residing as a patient in Bellevue, an asylum on the shores of Lake Constance in Kreuzlingen, Switzerland. This sanatorium was the most recent stopover for Warburg on an itinerary of recovery that began with a nervous breakdown in October 1918.[13] At Bellevue, a family-based asylum, staff and patients mixed together, sometimes as the audience for an evening concert or lecture. As proof of his recently acquired status as a revenant, on April 21, 1923, Warburg gave an illustrated slide lecture in the clinic to a selected audience of patients and invited guests, a group which included his psychiatrist, Ludwig Binswanger (1881–1966).[14] The success of the evening contributed to Binswanger's decision to discharge Warburg. For Warburg, this lecture revealed more than a return to mental health; as he "thankfully and surprisingly" discovered, it also signaled "a direct continuation and further development of the research I had begun during my healthy days."[15] Warburg's lecture "Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America," delivered twenty-seven years after his journey to the Southwest, has achieved almost talismanic status in the scholarly writing on Warburg.[16]

Why return, then, to this lecture, to this moment in the careers of Warburg and Cassirer? I do so for several reasons. First, although a provisional link between Warburg's and Cassirer's theories of the symbol has

been made in the literature, Warburg's "irrational" theory is ultimately set apart from Cassirer's "rational" philosophy.[17] Furthermore, the literature about Warburg's 1923 lecture on the Pueblo Indians swerves in two directions: either it reads Warburg's fragile psychological condition—the so-called "Kreuzlinger Passion"—as his own allegory of the serpent, or it sees the scholarly aspects of his research, which is to say the scientific nature of his trip to the Southwest and his findings, as the central subject of investigation.[18] On the contrary, I will focus on the development of Warburg and Cassirer's theories of the symbolic form and on the logic of the movement from proximity to distance within the symbolic form itself. With regard to the literature on Warburg's 1923 lecture, I am therefore interested less in the ways "the serpent is Warburg,"[19] or in the accuracy of his "scientific" assertions regarding Native American culture, than in the logic of the movement of the symbolic form between magical thought and scientific thought, and in the shift in viewpoint from proximity to distance this movement entails.

On the level of microhistory, I will suggest that Warburg's early thoughts about the meaning and function of the symbol, as well as the material he gathered and ordered for his library, helped shape Cassirer's conception of the symbolic form. Conversely, I aim to demonstrate how Cassirer's early (and as yet untranslated) publications for the Warburg Library provided a framework for the reworking of Warburg's own thoughts on the snake dance, as these appear in his 1923 lecture. I will argue that Goethe's theory of the symbol figures in this exploration of mutual influence. Writing to Saxl from Bellevue, Warburg expressed his desire that the lecture remain unpublished. He doubted the scientific worth of the address, referring to it as "formless and philologically unfounded." By virtue of its focus on the symbol, however, he nevertheless indicated the possible value of the lecture "as a document in the history of symbolic practice." As Warburg greatly valued Cassirer's opinion, he mentioned the philosopher as one of the select few whom he granted permission to read his text.[20]

## Historical Psychology

An oft-quoted anecdote describes how Warburg loathed the "Grenzpolizei," the border police who sought to shore up the perimeter of art history from incursions by neighboring disciplinary tribes.[21] As the arrangement of his library demonstrates, for Warburg the study of art was carried out alongside the study of religion, language, natural science, and philosophy.[22] While anthropology did not figure as one of these four

main divisions of the library, the subject matter of the books and the way they were sequenced announced a series of problems akin to those found in this field.[23] Remarking on the status of anthropology around 1900, Peter Burke notes that the "point was for Europeans to study the cultures of the world, describing their traits, patterns and styles, distinguishing 'culture areas' and 'collective psychology' (*Völkerpsychologie*), and looking for change over time, described in terms of 'diffusion,' 'development,' 'survival,' or 'degeneration.'"[24] At the time of Warburg's trip to the Southwest, native cultures were perceived to be in decline, a state of affairs which made the gathering of evidence a seemingly pressing pursuit. Fearing the irretrievable loss of the artifacts of native cultures, Adolf Bastian, for instance, the founder of the Berlin Museum of Ethnology, "raised his voice . . . to warn all who were interested in the psychological approach to human civilization that the sands of time were running out."[25] Although Warburg was critical of Bastian's "notoriously unreadable" books, he "certainly bought these books from an early date," and was "influenced by this powerful advocate for fieldwork in the service of cultural psychology."[26]

"Collective psychology" was inaugurated in 1860 in Germany by the appearance of Moritz Lazarus and Heymann Steinthal's journal for collective psychology and linguistics (*Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*).[27] Studying the "Volksgeist," or spirit of a people, Lazarus and Steinthal defined culture as a system of symbolic relations "that organizes our perceptions of reality."[28] As Lazarus put it in an 1862 issue of the journal: "In all habitual and national-characteristic reflection and skill, in all national manners and forms [of behavior], in all artistic practices and personal representations, *Geist* and nature, body and soul, tradition and present, the general and the personal are thoroughly intertwined [*gleichgemischt*]."[29] Here, culture occurs at the intersection of individual and social forces, as the individual constructs and is constructed by society. According to Lazarus, the individual is not merely an idealized subject of reason but also a lightning rod for psychological forces, a view in keeping with Warburg's own ideas. Since, for Lazarus and Steinthal, the "objective spirit" plays the more decisive role in the shaping of the individual and culture, they understood the individual to be inexorably linked to society. This, along with their preference for the idea of "culture" over "race," made their brand of anthropology "a weapon in their fight against 'Aryan' anti-Semitism."[30]

As Franz Boas would do several decades later, Lazarus and Steinthal rejected the Social Darwinist canon of cumulative social and cultural evolution. Instead, they favored the study of a plurality of cultures, all of equal value. Franz Boas carried these ideas to the United States upon his

emigration from Germany in 1896, the same year he founded the Department of Anthropology at Columbia University. Through his post at Columbia and his writings, Boas, as is well known, had a decisive impact on the field of anthropology.[31] In addition to their emphasis on cultural plurality, Lazarus, Steinthal, and Boas's rejection of the concept of race must have appealed to Warburg, especially as he was himself concerned with the "beast" of anti-Semitism and wrestled with his own "dialectics of assimilation."[32]

Before traveling to the Southwest, Warburg learned versions of historical psychology from his professors at the University of Bonn: the classicist Hermann Usener and the cultural historian Karl Lamprecht. As a student of Usener, Warburg studied classical mythology as a psychological problem—as early humankind's response to supernatural experience. Usener's 1905 article "Zeus Keraunos" manifests his approach to classical mythology. Concentrating his attention on the conception of lightning, Usener discovers a transition in the way lightning is conceived: initially experienced as an exclamation in response to a "momentary god"—Zeus originally meant "he who thunders"—on further experience this exclamation became associated with a "functional god," Keraunos, who is "perceived repeating the same action in different times and circumstances."[33] After developing from a so-called momentary god into a functional god, in Usener's last stage the functional god becomes a personal god with a proper name, Zeus, whose powerful yet "unforeseeable ways of being present" make him the subject of myth, cult, and poetry.[34]

As Usener makes clear, it is an individual's affective reaction to natural phenomena, in this case to the phenomenon of lightning, which engenders the name of the god associated with that occurrence. Moreover, the author underlines, the societal transition from the concept of the momentary god to the personal god involves a transition in the conception of the god as well as in the subject's relation to that god.[35] If mythological thought demonstrates the power of sensuous impressions on early humankind, then, as Warburg writes in his lecture notes of March 3, 1887, "the degree to which our sensuous impressions grow weaker, our logical thought gains the upper hand."[36] Nevertheless, myth persists. Even as logical thought gains the upper hand, we might note the way in which the force of the personal god exceeds language, exceeds, that is to say, his proper name. Unlike the functional god and the repetitive action with which this god is associated, Usener implies how the personal god Zeus is at once recognizable and unknowable. Inasmuch as "the divine and human are incommensurable," Warburg notes, "mankind will never be able to do without myth."[37] As Ernst Gombrich suggests, an "interest in sur-

vivals, in the tenacity of primitive tradition, was one of the persistent themes of Usener's lectures."[38]

By the turn of the century, the comparative study of past and present cultures was being developed into a subfield, "anthropology and the classics," that united the pursuits of scholars in Bonn with those in Cambridge, where the "myth and ritual school" exerted a substantial influence. "Anthropology and the classics" considered ritual as one of the primary forms of cultural myth. Here the rituals of classical Greece were studied alongside the myth, ritual, folklore, and ethnology of present-day so-called primitive cultures.[39] R. R. Marett's preface to *Anthropology and the Classics,* a collection of essays delivered at Oxford in 1908, usefully demonstrates the conception and relation of these terms, as well as the aim of this new field of study.

> By established convention Anthropology occupies itself solely with culture of the simpler or lower kind. The Humanities, on the other hand—those humanizing studies that, for us at all events, have their parent source in the literatures of Greece and Rome—concentrate on whatever is most constitutive and characteristic of the higher life of society.
>
> What, then, of phenomena of transition? Are they to be suffered to form a no-man's-land, a buffer-tract left purposely undeveloped, lest, forsooth, the associates of barbarism should fall foul of the friends of civilization? Plainly, in the cause of science, a pacific penetration must be . . . encouraged from both sides at once. Anthropology must cast forwards, the Humanities must cast back. . . . When the harvest has been fully gathered in, it will then be time to say, in regard to the classics both of Greece and Rome, how far the old lives on in the new, how far what the student in his haste is apt to label "survival" stands for a force still tugging at the heart-strings of even the most sophisticated and lordly heir of the ages.[40]

Marett's preface indicates the intellectual affinities between the Cambridge scholars and Usener's methodological approach. Inspired by what he had seen in the Berlin Museum of Ethnology, Usener, in an article of 1902, had "compared the figures of Greek comedy with those of the rituals of the Zuñi of New Mexico and the Hopi of Arizona, commenting that one had to shut one's eyes not to see the close relation between their demons and the phallic figures of Attic comedy."[41] What is noteworthy here is not simply a similar method of comparing classical cultures and modern-day "primitive" societies. The manner in which scholars in Cambridge and Bonn approached "phenomena in transition" from an interdisciplinary perspective, and, more strikingly, their recognition of "survival" as a persistent force in "even the most sophisticated cultures," would have a decisive impact on Warburg's own ideas.

In addition to Usener's brand of classical mythology, in his four courses with Karl Lamprecht Warburg was exposed to "a broader, more comprehensive understanding of the collective mentality (*Mentalität, Seelenleben*) of a civilization . . . as it evolved or changed over time."[42] In pursuit of the larger picture, Lamprecht was known for his focus on the evolution of seeming artistic asides such as the decorated initials used in early illuminated manuscripts.[43] Warburg, then, was schooled by Lamprecht not only in the importance of a wide range of documents for the investigation of human thought and action, but also in the potential significance of incidental artistic details as keys that might unlock larger cultural meanings. Kathryn Brush has persuasively argued for the central importance of Lamprecht's method for Warburg's own approach to the study of cultural images. At a time when the field of art history was separating itself from "neighboring fields of inquiry, including cultural history," "Lamprecht's consideration of the 'total' aspects of the social and cultural behavior of a given era—ranging from literature and economics to religious beliefs and rituals—must have seemed," to Warburg, "to be not only excitingly modern, but also to offer a rich and challenging interdisciplinary framework for the study of artistic monuments."[44]

The major studies undertaken by Warburg before he journeyed to the Southwest demonstrate his own brand of historical psychology. In his doctoral thesis of 1893, "Sandro Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and *Spring:* An Examination of Concepts of Antiquity in the Italian Early Renaissance," as well as in his detailed article on the Florentine court spectacles of 1589, Warburg sets the image in relation to a wide range of textual and visual documents in order to examine the pagan origins of European culture.[45] If he had learned from Usener about the persistence of "pagan survivals," he developed this idea into his own theory of the oscillating polarity of the symbol. Assessing the significance of these early studies, Charlotte Schoell-Glass notes their contribution to the field: Warburg's "findings modified considerably the image of 'Renaissance Man' as the exemplary and untroubled go-getter who had emerged—for example—from Burckhardt's writings. For Warburg, the process of emancipation [from primitive fears, myths, and superstitions] revealed itself as painful and dangerous, as well as potentially reversible."[46]

In addition, Warburg's early writings demonstrate the way anthropology and the classics might relate to the visual arts of the Quattrocento. From a lighthearted perspective, we can underscore this point by citing Heinrich Dilly, who discovered "The Birth of the Greeks in Spring" ("Die Geburt bei den Griechen im Frühling"), a satiric title given to Warburg's thesis by two of his students in their newspaper honoring his sixtieth birthday.[47] Much as this reworking of Warburg's thesis title transforms

an intellectual achievement into parody, so, as in all good satire, does it reveal the motive behind the method. Warburg argues that Botticelli painted old motifs in new guises, and it is this theory—missed by most at the time—that his students offer up in satirical relief. If the new can be construed as old, then, as Warburg suggests in a highly nuanced set of passages, the old can also be made new. Although Greece, to echo the preface to *Anthropology and Classics,* constitutes "the higher life of society," this higher life includes primitive fears and superstitions, the mythology Warburg finds associated with Boticelli's *Spring.* It would not be until he journeyed to the Southwest in 1896 that Warburg would apply his own version of what he memorably termed "the continuing life [*Nachleben*] of classical antiquity" to a contemporary so-called primitive society.[48] Though Warburg's approach was his own, his lecture on the Pueblo Indians thus has its place in an interdisciplinary, historical context.

## Journey to the Southwest

In September 1895 Warburg left Florence for New York in order to attend the wedding of his brother, Paul, to Nina Loeb, the daughter of a prominent New York banker.[49] In unpublished notes for the 1923 lecture, Warburg describes how "the cultural desert of the East Coast" motivated him to "escape to the natural object and to scholarship." "Moreover," he adds, "I had acquired an honest disgust for aestheticizing art history. The formal approach to the image—devoid of understanding its biological necessity as a product between religion and artistic practice— . . . appeared to me to lead merely to sterile word-mongering."[50] Perhaps in reference to Bernard Berenson's book of 1896, *The Florentine Painters of the Renaissance,* Warburg characterizes "aestheticizing art history" as an approach to the discipline that considers works independent of their function or cultural origin.[51] Just as Usener had transformed the study of myth from a historical and etymological concern into a psychological problem, so Warburg sought to move away from the decorous language of art history toward an anthropology of the visual that would register the origins of images in affective response. Indeed, Saxl remarks, it was as a student of Usener that Warburg voyaged to Santa Fe, to Albuquerque, and to the area of the Mesa Verde.[52]

The journey, Warburg notes, was additionally fueled by "the will to the Romantic" (*der Wille zum Romantischen*), a feeling that encompassed "a desire for a somewhat more manly activity than had been granted me so far."[53] Shedding a bit more light on this remark, the author writes of

his "annoyance" and "shame" at having had to abandon Hamburg—and his brother and the family of his "dear wife"—during the cholera epidemic of 1892. It is commonly known that from an early age Warburg harbored a morbid fear of illness, a phobia that was the source of a palpable anxiety. Although he could not remain in Hamburg during the cholera epidemic, perhaps he could venture to the Southwest, where, as a participant observer of the rituals of the indigenous peoples, he could gain some distance from—and understanding of—his own "primitive" fears. In addition to Warburg's desire to come to terms with his own anxieties, the transition from emotional reaction to intellectual reflection implied in his remarks is also found in his meditations on the symbol. Warburg's "will to the Romantic" resonates with Goethe's own theory of the symbol, especially as Warburg understood this theory through the mediation of Cassirer.

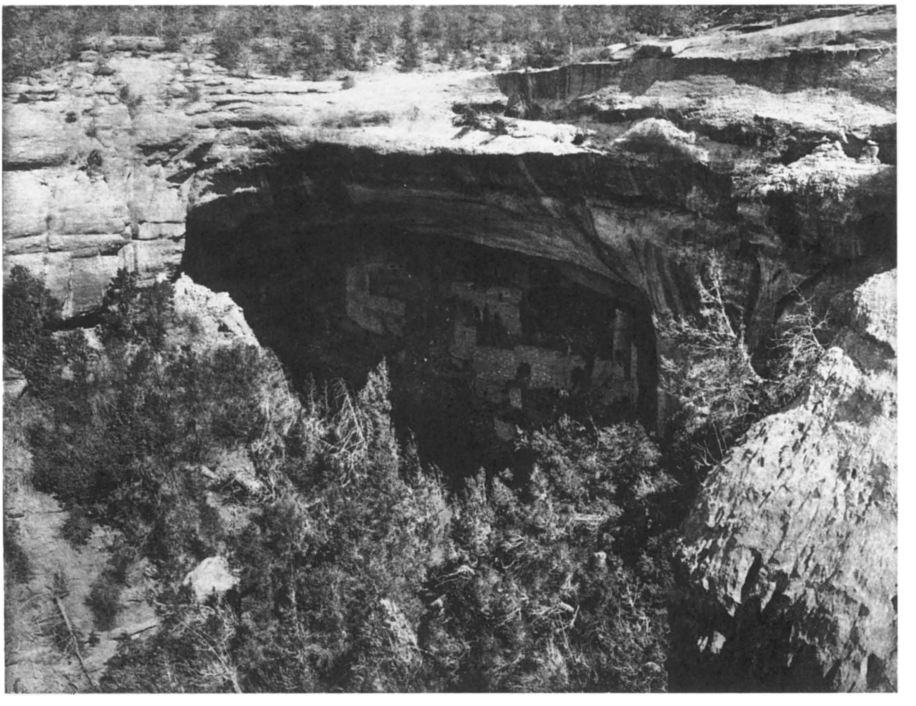
Although Warburg fled from family members, it was nevertheless through their contacts that he was able to meet with officials at the Peabody Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he saw examples of buffalo wall paintings of the Dakota Indians.[54] According to Claudia Naber, Warburg may have known of these wall paintings through illustrated travel accounts by George Catlin or Maximilian Prinz zu Wied.[55] At the Smithsonian Institution, Warburg's study of ceramics and other Native American artifacts enabled him to carry out "some complex and comprehensive research into the symbolic use and meaning of the ornamental decorations found in repeated patterns on Pueblo material culture, such as in the architecture of houses, sand paintings, terracotta vases and kachina masks."[56] Finally, Warburg was introduced to Cyrus Adler, Jesse Walter Fewkes, Frank Hamilton Cushing, and James Mooney, with whom he continued correspondence after his visit to the Southwest.[57] Warburg first learned of the Hopi snake dance from Mooney, whose 1890 book *The Ghost-Dance Religion and the Sioux Outbreak* studied this religion transculturally, noting its similarities with possession states of the Hebrews, Joan of Arc, and the Quakers.[58]

By an act of congress, the Bureau of American Ethnology was established at the Smithsonian in 1879 for the purposes of documenting cultures in transition, or those otherwise presumed to be in decline. The annual reports of the bureau were filled with research on the myths, rituals, and artifacts of the indigenous cultures of North America; these reports, which Warburg continued to receive after his journey, formed the basis of his knowledge of the Southwest.[59] Along with Boas, whom he had met in New York, Warburg cites Adler, Fewkes, Cushing, and Mooney as "pioneers of native research" who had opened his "eyes to the world-wide importance of prehistoric and 'wild' America." Inspired by

them, he "decided to visit Western America both as a modern creation and in its lower Hispano-Indian strata."[60] As Warburg's remark makes clear, it was not merely the "primitive" aspects of Southwest Indian culture that sparked his desire to visit the region. Rather, as in both the new field of anthropology and the classics and his own early scholarship on Botticelli and early Florentine Renaissance visual culture, it was the simultaneous presence of the "primitive" and the present-day that captured his attention.

Warburg's first goal was to visit the recently discovered cliff dwellings of the Mesa Verde, photographs of which he had seen in a book recommended to him by Cyrus Adler, librarian of the Smithsonian. On its publication in 1893, *The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde, Southwestern Colorado: Their Pottery and Implements,* written by the young Swedish scientist Gustaf Nordenskiöld, had garnered the attention of scholars of Native American culture (figs. 16 and 17). Discovered in 1888 by the rancher and amateur archaeologist Richard Wetherill, the cliff dwellings were thought to have built by the Anasazi, the oldest civilization of North America.[61] During his week-long visit to the cliff dwellings in December 1895, Warburg stayed at the Wetherill ranch near Mancos.[62] In addition to viewing the smaller dwellings, with Wetherill's brother John as a guide, Warburg became acquainted with the enormous Cliff Palace, the largest cave settlement in North America, which contained over two hundred living rooms and twenty-three ceremonial spaces. Warburg was deeply impressed by the cliff dwellings, which he dubbed the "American Pompeii."[63] In keeping with his interest in the afterlife of antiquity in present-day cultures, Warburg's examination of the cliff dwellings was followed by his study of the descendants of the Anasazi, the Pueblo Indians.[64]

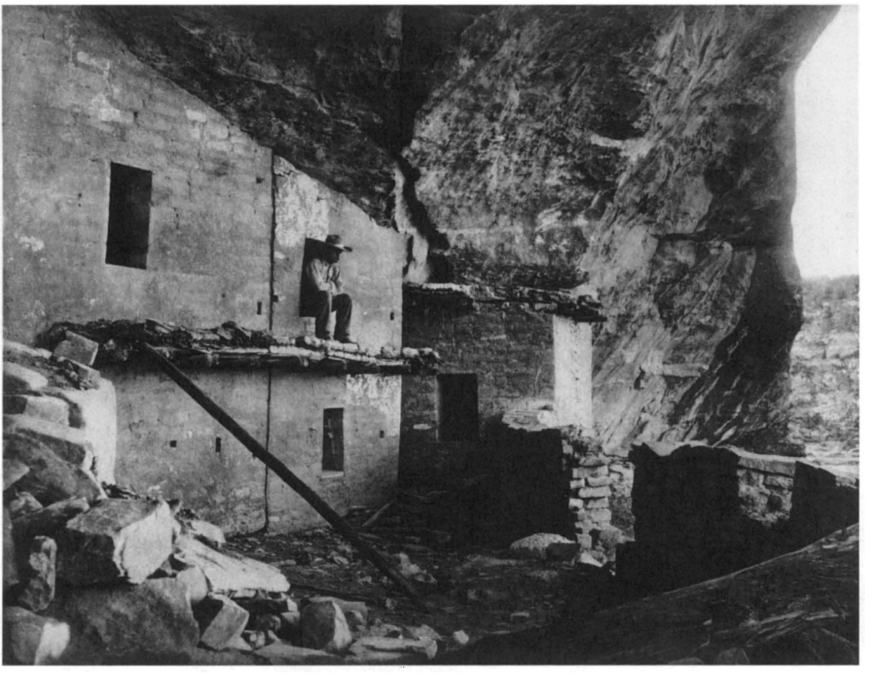
At the end of March 1896, Warburg left Colorado for Santa Fe and Albuquerque, ending his trip with a one-and-a-half-month journey to San Juan, Laguna, Acoma, Cochiti, and San Ildefonso; the Pueblos of New Mexico that had only recently been declared reservations after the annexation of the state by the United States government (fig. 18).[65] Unlike the majority of the Indians in the East, who had been driven from their own land, many Indians in New Mexico and Arizona still resided in their pueblos, living in houses one entered via a ladder on the rooftop, and conducting ceremonies in subterranean spaces known as kivas. If the Indian dwellings had remained the same, their traditional way of life had been altered by the arrival of what Warburg termed the "Spanish intermezzo" and continued to be threatened by Indian agents and missionaries who had come to "civilize the natives."[66] Even the field research undertaken by the Smithsonian's Bureau of American Ethnology, which aimed to preserve these cultures in transition, was a disturbance. In this sense, War-



16. Gustaf Nordenskiöld, "The Cliff Palace," 1893, photograph. Reproduced from Nordenskiöld, *The Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde,* trans. D. Lloyd Morgan (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt and Söner, 1893).

burg's collecting of Native American artifacts, his subsequent participation in the antelope dance at San Ildefonso, and his photographs of sacred kachina figures, raise ethical questions regarding the trafficking in cultures as well as the unequal relation between ethnographers and "ethnographic subjects," which have been the focus of recent scholarly criticism.[67]

After his visit to the Pueblos Warburg came to California, where he spent two months visiting Pasadena, the new and very fashionable Hotel del Coronado near San Diego, and the campuses of Stanford and Berkeley. At Stanford Warburg made the acquaintance of Earl Barnes, a psychologist who studied childhood cognition and creativity with the aid of children's drawings.[68] Warburg then left San Francisco and traveled through Fort Wingate to Arizona in order to learn about Hopi Indian culture. There, "in the isolated Hopi villages in the Arizona desert" beyond

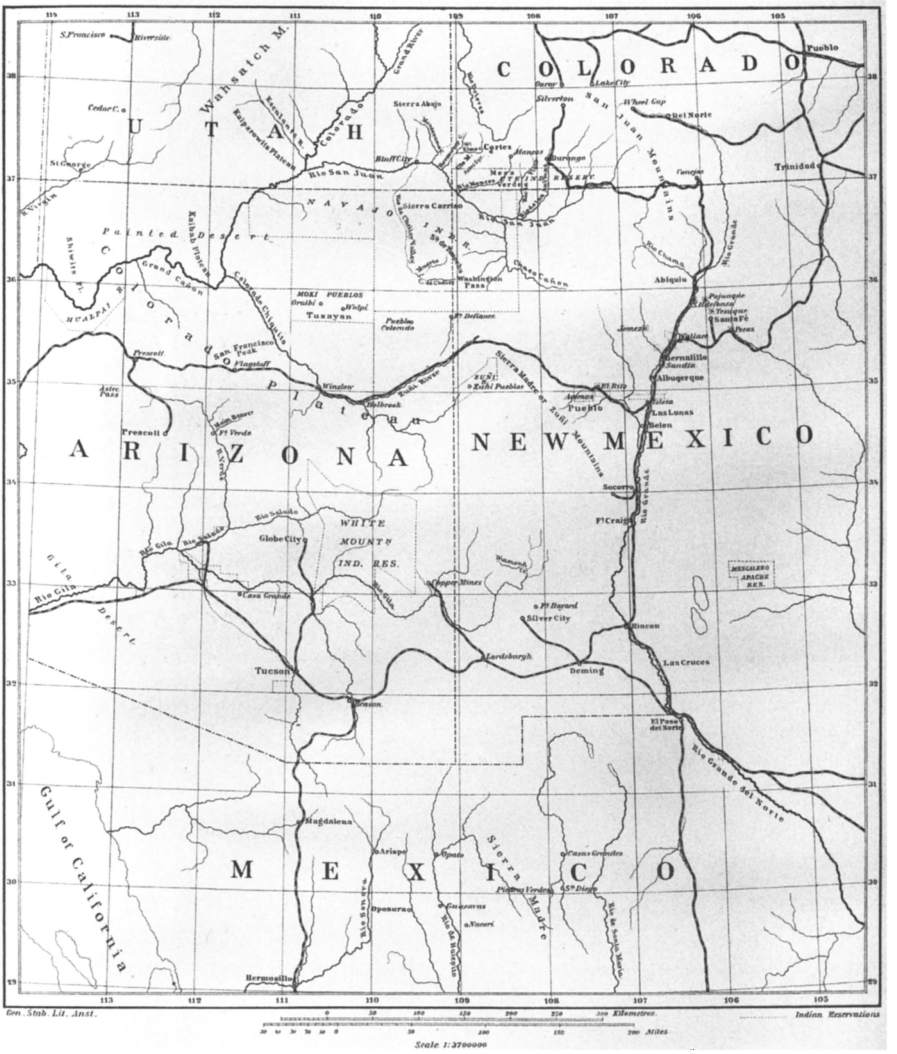


17. Gustaf Nordenskiöld, "The Balcony House," 1893, photograph. Reproduced from Nordenskiöld, *Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde.*

the reach of the Atchison–Topeka–Santa Fe railway line, Warburg believed "he would be able to see a ritual from which the rational mediation of civilization was absent," in contrast to what he had found in New Mexico.[69]

Warburg stopped first in Keams Canyon, where he gave a version of the creativity test he had learned from Barnes to fourteen children of the Hopi Industrial School. In the 1923 lecture, he describes the results:

> I once invited the children of such a school to illustrate the German fairy tale of "Johnny-Head-in-the Air," which they did not know, because a storm is referred to and I wanted to see if the children would draw the lightning realistically or in the form of the serpent. Of the 14 drawings, all very lively but also under the influence of the American school, twelve were drawn realistically. But two of them depicted indeed the indestructible symbol of the serpent, as it is found in the kiva.[70]

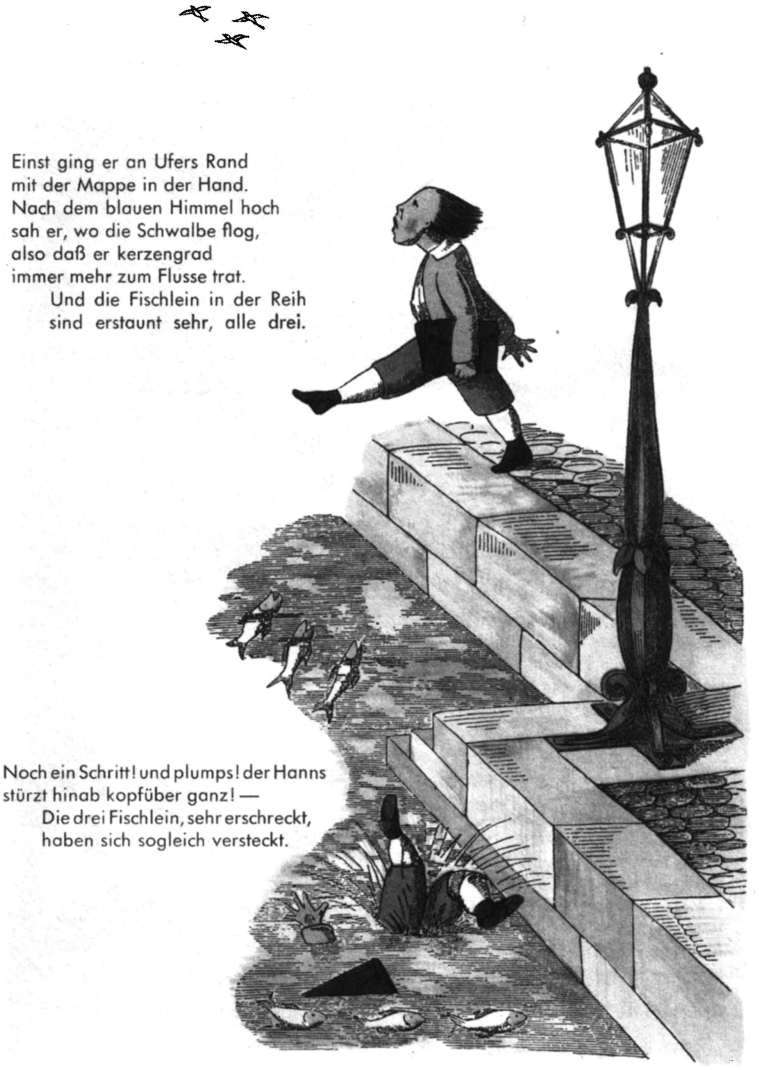



18. Gustaf Nordenskiöld, map of the Southwest. Reproduced from Nordenskiöld, *Cliff Dwellers of the Mesa Verde.*

Like the tale of Thales in Plato's *Theaetatus,* the "well-known" story of "Johnny-Head-in-the-Air" ("Hans Guck-in-die-Luft") recounts the perils of the skyward gaze for those whose heads are lost in the clouds. For Warburg, this tale includes the lightning storm as a central feature. It is interesting to note, however, that the version of the story in Heinrich Hoffmann'a popular collection, *Slovenly Peter, or Humorous Stories and Droll Images for Children Ages Three to Six* (*Der Struwwelpeter, oder lustige Geschichten und drollige Bilder für Kinder von 3 bis 6 Jahren*), does not include a storm at all.[71] In Hoffmann's version, Johnny/Hans is so lost in thought that after being knocked over by a dog, he falls into a lake (fig. 19), only to be fortunately rescued by two men who happen to be nearby. Johnny/Hans is, in other words, not caught off guard by a storm so much as by his own thoughts. The "droll image" of the school notebook floating away with exaggerated foreshortening into the distance (fig. 20) suggests the moral: better to keep a grip on one's thoughts on paper than to attempt to grasp the infinity of the cosmos.

Rather than recount the metaphorical perils of the skyward gaze, and with it the dangers of the point of view necessary for knowledge, Warburg's version of the story focuses on the meaning of the symbolic form of lightning. Like Usener, in this exercise Warburg is interested in "survivals," in the persistence of the serpent as a weather deity in Hopi culture despite an overlay of Western cultural ideas in the society. Cleo Jurino's drawing of the serpent and the world house with the stair-shaped roof (fig. 21), executed at Warburg's request during the Indian's visit to his hotel in Santa Fe, shows the serpent in its lightning shape (as we saw in the extract above, two children who had undertaken Warburg's exercise depicted the serpent in a similar manner). This is the serpent as it is rendered in the kiva, either in sand paintings on the floor or on carved lightning altars (figs. 22 and 23). Remarking on the carved altar for "lightning from all points on the compass," Warburg notes how the lightning serpent is placed "in the company of other sky-oriented symbols."[72] If by magical affinity the symbolic form of the serpent is lightning, then—to follow the causality of magic—the serpent can invoke the storm, and with it, the much-needed rain. While such cause and effect does not stand the test of scientific method, it nevertheless demonstrates the manner in which the symbolic form of the serpent may be magically associated with a causal outcome. Because of the "boundless communicability between man and environment" in the cosmology of the Pueblo Indians, Warburg argues, "this proximity of fantastic magic and sober purposiveness" is not "a symptom of a cleavage." Here, instead, "superstition goes hand in hand with livelihood."[73]

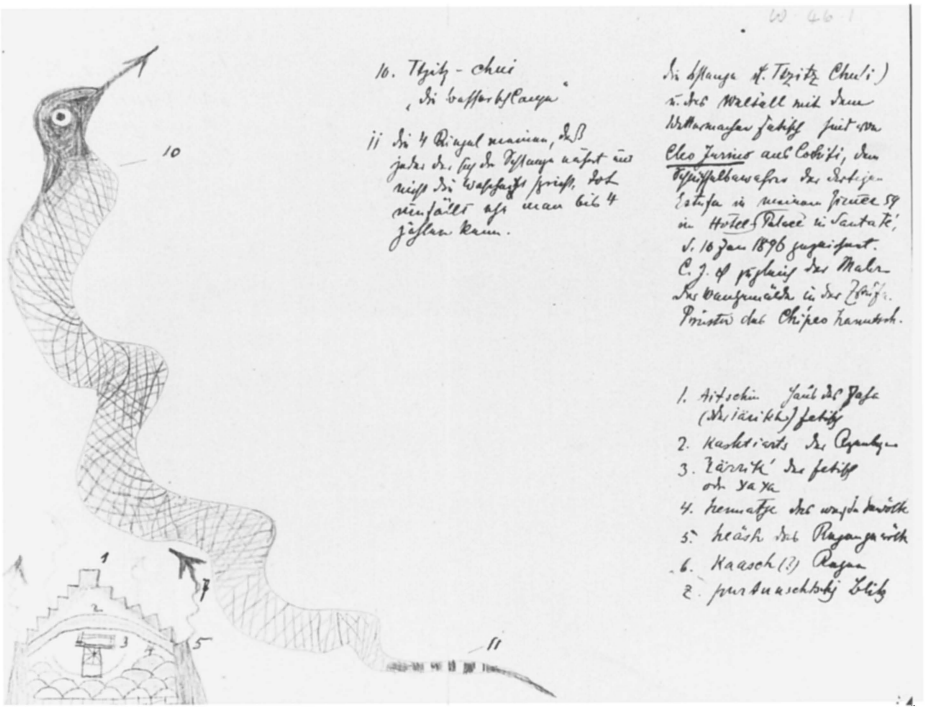
As the guest of the Mennonite missionary Heinrich Voth, who served




19. Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hans Guck-in-die-Luft*. Illustration in Hoffmann, *Der Struwwelpeter,* 1861. Heinrich Hoffmann Museum, Frankfurt am Main.

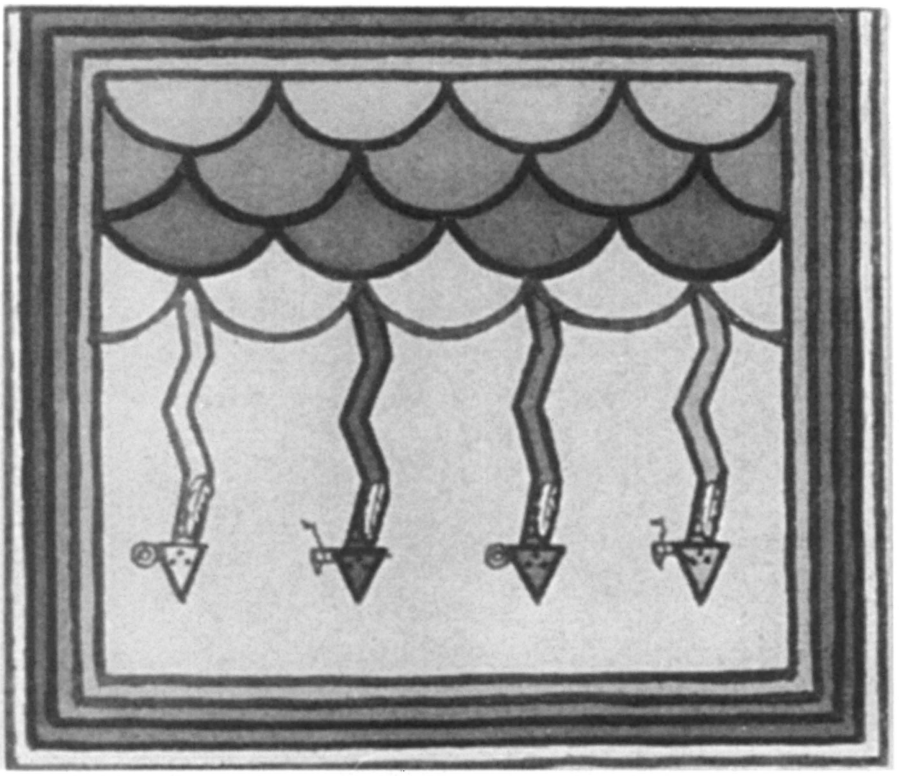
20. Heinrich Hoffmann, *Hans Guck-in-die-Luft* (cont.).

as a well-acquainted cicerone of Hopi culture, during his last week in the Southwest Warburg observed the Hopi *humiskachina* dance in the market square of the remote Pueblo cliff village of Oraibi (fig. 24).[74] While this dance—a "dance of the growing corn"—might appear to us as "a form of play" or a "festive accessory to everyday life," Warburg asserts that the ritual performance is "in fact a magical practice for the social provision of food."[75] The kachinas, like the serpent, are "demonic mediators between man and nature" (fig. 25)[76] Warburg recounts this "magical practice" for his audience by noting that the dance is performed by twenty to thirty male and ten female dancers, or *manas* (that is, men representing themselves as female figures), who transform themselves "into kachinas through their masks." The "symbolic representations" on the dancers' masks include the stair-shaped cosmos, semicircular clouds, and short strokes depicting rain that we find in the drawings of Pueblo cosmology. As invocations for rain, the "prayers and chants accompanying the masked dances are offered" to a small pine-tree altar decorated with feathers. "This tree," Warburg remarks, "is the nature-given mediator, opening the way to the subterranean element." In the case of the serpent, the kachina, and the tree-altar, then, a symbol is created as an "instrument of orientation" and a "connecting agent."



21. Cleo Jurino, drawing of a serpent with notations by Aby Warburg, 1895–96. Warburg Institute, London.

For Warburg, the renderings of the serpent as lightning and the *humiskachina* dance demonstrate "the Pueblo Indians' peculiar condition of hybridity and transition." Listen to Warburg: "They are clearly no longer primitives dependent on their senses, for whom no action directed toward the future can exist; but neither are they technologically secure Europeans, for whom future events are expected to be organically or mechanically determined. They stand on the middle ground between magic and logos, and their instrument of orientation is the symbol." Captivated by these Native Americans, seeking sympathetically to explain "their psychic life," Warburg highlights the so-called "magical" connections between the Pueblo Indians and nature in the symbols of the serpent and the tree. By rendering lightning in the form of a serpent, as Jurino and the two children did in their drawings, and by donning the mask (and so the guise) of the underworld spirit of the *humiskachina*, the Pueblo Indians join signifier and signified, cause and effect, through a magical affinity. "In what ways can we perceive essential character traits of pagan, primitive humanity?" Warburg asks.[77] In relation to the Pueblo

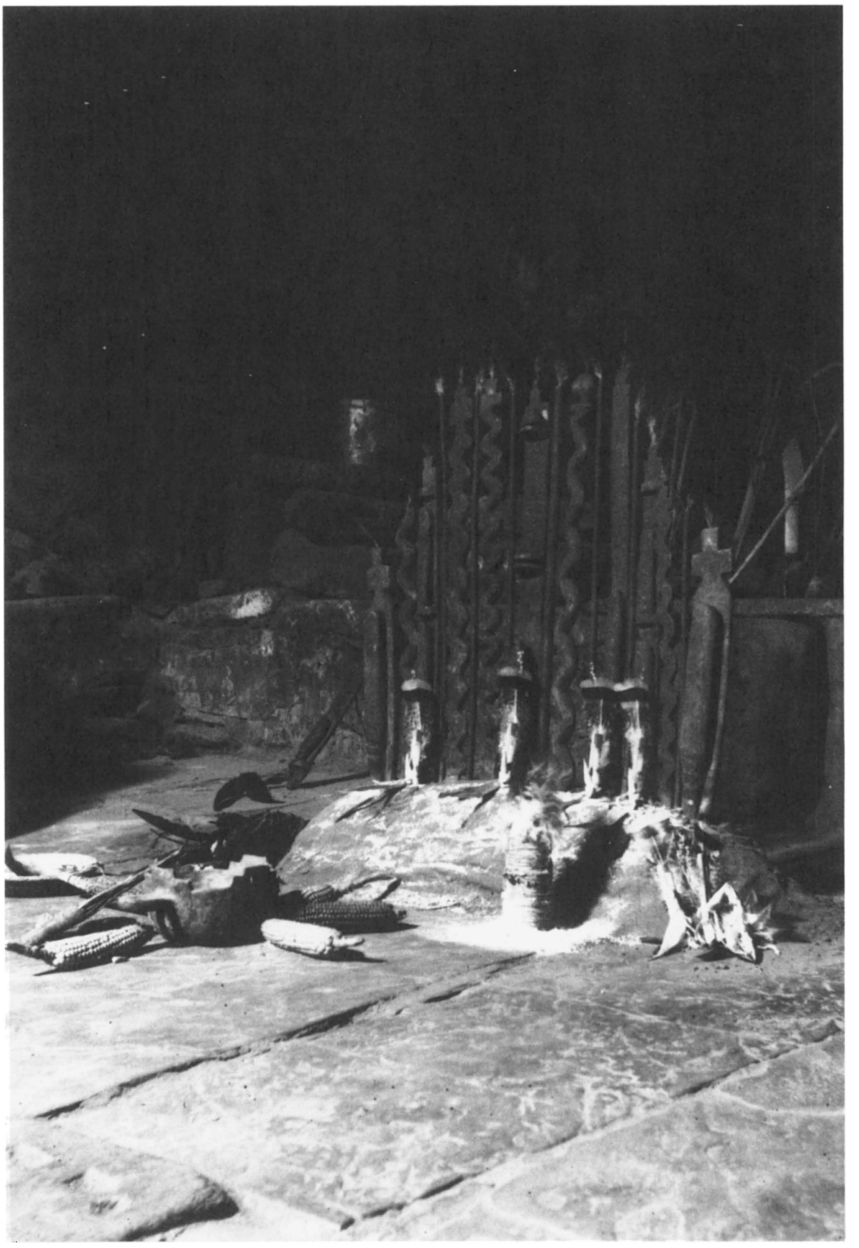


22. Serpent as lightning. Reproduction of a kiva floor. Warburg Institute, London.

Indians, the answer he provides is twofold: on the one hand, the Pueblo Indians are "clearly no longer primitives dependent on their senses" alone; on the other hand, because of their investment in the magical connection of object, symbol, and causality—of serpent, lightning, and rain, or of the power of the *humiskachina,* the feathers on the ritual tree, and a prosperous corn harvest—the Pueblo Indians demonstrate a notion of logical causality at the same time as they remain caught within the circular reasoning of their magical cosmology.

## Warburg's Psychological Theory of the Symbol

Inspired by Friedrich Theodor Vischer, Warburg considers the symbols of the Pueblo Indians from the standpoint of psychology.[78] Vischer



23. H. R. Voth, photograph of the Twvongya in situ during the Wuwtsim Ceremonial at Orayvi. Mennonite Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, Kans.

24. Aby Warburg, "Hopi Village of Oraibi," 1896, photograph. Warburg Institute, London.

defines the symbol as "a connection of image and meaning through a point of comparison."[79] He distinguishes three main forms of the symbol. In the first form, the religious symbol, an indissoluble connection is established between object and meaning, or sign and signified. Warburg's remark that for the Pueblo Indians "the snake is lightning" is in keeping with Vischer's definition of the religious symbol as an image animated by magical or supernatural powers. The aesthetic symbol, Vischer's second form, also entails an affective connection between symbol and subject; however, this is a "connection with reservation." Here the viewer does not believe in the magical power of the image; yet during the aes-

25. Jo Mora, *Teu'-Mahs Katchina, Walpi,* 1904, engraving. School of American Research, Catalogue Number SAR.1981-12-2.

thetic experience the beholder is "nevertheless compelled by it." As Vischer makes clear, "even the unpoetic language of everyday life is constantly personifying objects in the same way [as one animates the image in the aesthetic experience]: 'Grapes like to be warm,' 'The nail doesn't want to come out of the plank.'"[80] Like these examples, contemplation of the aesthetic symbol comprises one's affective response as well as one's thinking about the image. In Vischer's third form, the rational symbol, an affective connection to the symbol—and with it the subject's proximity to the image—are replaced by the intellectual distance of sober consideration. In the form of the rational symbol, image and meaning are connected through conceptual thought and intellectual reflection. Vischer alludes to a chronological and evolutionary trajectory of the symbol: he compares the religious symbol, a "dark, unfree" earlier phase, to its diametrically opposite form, the "lucid and free" rational symbol.

Unlike Vischer, whose theory addresses the realm of aesthetics, Warburg sought a theory of the symbol that would apply equally well to every symbolic form of culture and to culture as a whole. If Warburg rejected the chronological and evolutionary connotations of Vischer's three forms of the symbol, his theory preserves Vischer's understanding of the psychological relation of beholder and symbol as a movement from affective response to intellectual consideration. What is more, Warburg modified Vischer's notion of the polarity of the symbol in order to underscore the psychological movement of the subject in relation to the image. As Bernard Buschendorf rightly remarks, Warburg replaced Vischer's more moderate opposition of the religious and rational forms of the symbol with the extreme opposition of magical bonding and logical separation; in an analogous move, he conceived of the concept of culture as encompassing the most primitive form of superstition and the most abstract scientific form. Finally, Warburg made the logical status of this opposition more precise. According to Vischer, only the form of the aesthetic symbol is defined through a contrasting polarity—grasping the aesthetic symbol, it will be remembered, involves both the animation of the image of the religious symbol and the "thinking" about the image of the rational symbol. Warburg, by contrast, determines the opposition of magical grasping and logical distance as the expression of a polar or contrastive relation inherent in all forms of the symbol. It follows that Warburg defines the most diverse areas of culture as existing somewhere between the polar extremes of proximity and distance. Warburg, then, conceives culture as a discontinuous structure.[81]

As Warburg defines culture as a discontinuous cosmos shaped and reshaped by polar-contrastive forces of proximity and distance, so he conceives of the image as a psychological resolution—or balance—of con-

flicting impulses of expression and form. On the one hand, the image is a product of the desire to capture the most intense expression of life; on the other hand, the image represents the urge to distance oneself from the immediacy of life by forming the world into an object of mental or visual representation. In terms of our triad of seeing, representing, and knowing, we might describe this as a conflict between seeing and representation, where "seeing" refers to sensuous experience and "representing" to the constitution of a mental or visual image. Continually at odds with one another, the antagonistic impulses of expression and form propel the creation of images, just as these contrary forces account for humankind's engagement with the world of sensuous experience. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Goethe captured the psychological tension between expression and form, or experience and representation, and the role of the image in this relation, when he penned his maxim "There is no way of more surely avoiding the world than by art, and it is by art that you form the surest link with it." Cassirer would later articulate this very relationship in different terms, characterizing the symbolic form as the outcome of a dialectic of life and spirit.

From his dissertation on Botticelli to his 1923 lecture and beyond, Warburg rendered this opposition within culture and its images into a research program that focused on the continuing vitality (*Nachleben*) of pagan antiquity. As we have seen, he modified Vischer's theory of the symbol when he addressed the "psychic life of the Indians." Moving beyond Vischer, Warburg strove to find the "psychological law" that underlay the creation of all symbolic forms. In doing so, he hoped to conceive a theory of art based on a fundamental psychological principle—a law and a theory, in other words, that would determine the image from an epistemological point of view and place it within a unified conceptual field.[82] Since it "was one of Warburg's basic convictions that any attempt to detach the image from its relation to religion and poetry, to cult and drama, is like cutting off its lifeblood," the unified system in which he sought to place the image was none other than "culture as a whole."[83] To determine the underlying law of the image was therefore to discover a truth about culture itself. If Warburg felt this to be an urgent task, he did so rightly, for it was one with potentially deep and lasting implications.

While he was in California, Warburg used the word "symbolic form" for the first time in a suite of unpublished notes for an essay entitled "Symbolism Conceived as a Primary Differentiating Contour" ("Symbolismus aufgefasst als primäre Umfangsbestimmung").[84] With his title the author transfers the meaning of the German word *Umfangsbestimmung,* a term of Kantian logic that refers to the determination of the extension of a class, to the creation and meaning of the symbolic form.

Kantian logic describes the determination of the extension of a class and of the differentiation of one class from another as a setting of boundaries. In his notes, Warburg describes the origins of the symbolic form in the drawing of a contour—in a symbolic mark, if you will, that makes its initial appearance as an affective response to external stimuli. I would suggest that this symbolic mark or contour is implied in Usener's definition of the momentary god Zeus, since "he who thunders" is the "primitive" exclamation to the appearance of lightning. Just as Usener and Vischer characterize the names of the gods or the forms of the symbol through sets of differing relations between subject and world, or between beholder and image, so for Warburg the symbolic form, as well as the subject's orientation to this form, is expressive of the psychological poles of proximity and distance. In his unpublished notes Warburg considers religion, art, language, law, and bodily accessories such as jewelry and costume to be symbolic forms. Lapidary comments on the artist and the work of art provide a further outline of his thinking.

If symbolism entails the drawing of a differentiating contour, then for Warburg "the work of art is a product of repeating attempts on the part of the subject to create a [feeling of] distance between subject and object." As his remarks make clear Warburg locates the work of art in the *Zwischenraum*—in the intermediary space between subject and object, or subject and world. Sited in this way, the work of art partakes of the subject's tie to the world of sensuous experience and the subject's desire to distance herself from the world through the creation of an image. In a similar way, Warburg positions the "probing or testing artist" between the "grasping human" (*Greifmensch*) and the "thinking human" (*Denkmensch*). Poised between the physical and the conceptual grasp, the artist, like the grasping human, "sublates distance" in her desire to capture the immediacy of life in artistic expression;[85] and yet, like the thinking human, who recreates the world in the symbolic form of language, the artist represents a world in the form of an image. In doing so, she creates a space between herself and the world of sensuous experience.

Writing in 1930, Edgar Wind offers an unsurpassed synopsis of Warburg's theory of the artistic image:

> The critical point, however, lies in the middle of the spectrum, where the symbol is understood as a sign and yet remains a living image, where the psychological excitation, held in tension between the two poles, is neither so concentrated by the compelling power of the metaphor that it turns into action, nor so detached by the force of analytical thought that it fades into conceptual thinking. It is here that the image, in the sense of the artistic illusion, finds its place.

> Artistic creation embodies this intermediate position by transforming physical materials into aesthetic representations. So, too, the enjoyment of art, through contemplation of the representation, recreates and experiences this suspension between concept and magical symbol. Both, according to Warburg, draw on the darkest energies of life, and remain dependent on them and threatened by them even where a harmonious equilibrium is the product of a confrontation, in which the whole man, with his religious urge for incarnation and his intellectual desire for enlightenment, with his impulse to personal engagement and his will to critical detachment, participates.[86]

Warburg asks, in "what respect can the symbolic act—even according to the law of the smallest powers—be conceived as lawful?" To underscore that his theory of the symbol is based on a psychological principle, on the title page to "Symbolism Conceived as a Primary Differentiating Contour" he evocatively suggests that symbolism be conceived as the "function of the force of gravity in the intellectual household."[87] Since so-called primitive fears reside deep within the psychology of humankind, the symbolic forms—the shapes, if you will, of these formless fears—reside within cultural memory.[88] The history of the *Greifmensch,* of the human that grasps the physical object with the hand or the mental object all too closely, thereby connecting sign and signified in magical association, is not only the ancestor but also the contemporary of the *Denkmensch,* the thinking human. Symbolism is a means of orientation that remains forever precarious—just as one can voluntarily shift one's point of view on an object, so can one's orientation "relapse," Warburg writes, to a state of purely affective reaction, to a place where a differentiating contour does not separate subject and object. Beginning the notes for his essay in March 1896, Warburg hopefully anticipates "clarity and conclusion" on the question of symbolism; ending his notes in 1901, his musings, while undeniably provocative, trail off into inconclusiveness.[89]

In addition to several substantive essays on the Quattrocento, Warburg consented in 1920, which is to say shortly after he fell "gravely ill," to publish what he considered merely a "fragment": "Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther." In this essay the author criticizes the "classically rarefied version of the ancient gods . . . so successfully imposed on us, ever since Winckelmann." Along the way he describes interrelations of the "Olympian" and the "daemonic." Warburg explains:

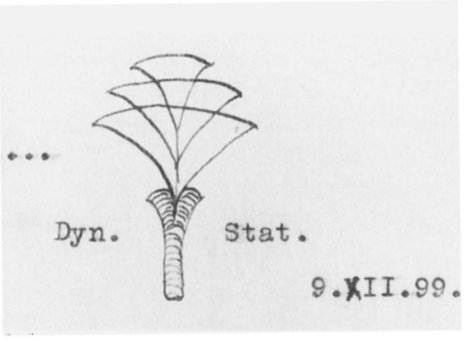
> The astrologer in the age of the Reformation accepted these opposite poles of mathematical abstraction and devout self-association—irreconcilable

> though they seem to a modern scientist—as the pivots of one vibrant, primordial state. Logic sets a mental space between man and object by applying a conceptual label; magic destroys that space by creating a superstitious—theoretical or practical—association between man and object. In the divinatory workings of the astrologer's mind, these two processes act as a single, primitive tool that he can use both to make measurements and to work magic. That age when logic and magic blossomed, like trope and metaphor, in Jean Paul's words, "grafted to a single stem," is inherently timeless: by showing such a polarity in action, the historian of civilization furnishes new grounds for a more profoundly positive critique of historiography that rests on a purely chronological foundation.[90]

Like logic, which "sets a mental space between man and object by applying a conceptual label," in his theory of the sublime Kant demonstrates how reason creates a mental space between humankind and the world of sensuous experience. Yet for Kant, it will be recalled, the aesthetic experience of the sublime does not lead to conceptual thinking so much as it offers an occasion, or manifestation, of the ebb and flow of reason. To this end, the sublime is a pressure point within Kant's scheme of subjectivity: the occasion of the sublime, we might say in the language of Usener or Warburg, begins with a "primitive" affective response to the world of sensuous experience; this occasion concludes, however, in a triumph of reason over internal and external nature.

For Kant, I have argued, reason and nature are conceived as the pivots of one system. As the experience of the sublime demonstrates, theory, or thinking about the world, begins with looking, or perceiving the world and its contents. On account of his noble desire for "the highest good," however, Kant highlights what Rosalind Krauss in another context calls "the logical moment."[91] In doing so, Kant presses the potential chaos of sensuous experience into the service of a systematic, rational cosmos. The sublime, the "abyss in which reason threatens to lose itself," is, on this account, not so much a threat as an aesthetic occasion. A rather small sketch in the notes for "Symbolism Conceived as a Primary Differentiating Contour" suggests how Warburg conceives of reason and unreason, magic and logic, as "grafted to a single stem" (fig. 26). As this sketch demonstrates, Warburg does not conceive of the movement between the poles of proximity and distance, or irrationality and rationality, as unidirectional or teleological—as Kant stresses—but rather as an oscillating movement for which no single outcome is offered. For Warburg, then, the continuing vitality (*Nachleben*) of antiquity is not Winckelmann's "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur" but the struggle between magic and reason for "the creation of [a feeling of] distance."

The notes Warburg began in California and his 1920 "fragment" give




26. Aby Warburg, *Symbolism Conceived as a Primary Differentiating Contour,* drawing. Warburg Institute, London.

a clear indication of his preoccupations with the symbolic form. By 1920, the author had crafted a comprehensive theory of symbolism in which the polarity of the symbol is a central feature. Yet the problem remained for Warburg of how to provide this antithesis with philosophical grounding. As a consequence, a central question of his 1923 lecture, "To what extent does this pagan worldview, as it persists among the Indians, give us a yardstick for the development from primitive paganism, through the paganism of classical antiquity to modern man?"[92] remained philosophically unanswerable for Warburg in 1896. Although he had succeeded in defining the symbol psychologically, and of composing a theory of symbolism that accounted for both the creation and reception of symbolic forms, he had failed to establish a systematic basis for his theory of the symbol. Just as he portrayed the Hopi Indians as being embedded within their own magical belief system, so the author himself remained caught within his own psychological definitions of the symbol.

In the aforementioned passage from "Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther," Warburg indicates that determining a polarity of the symbol "in action" would have "profoundly positive" implications for the writing of history. Judging by Kant's example, we might claim the same for philosophy, since a theory of the symbol such as the one Warburg suggests would put critical pressure on the chronological and teleological foundations on which both history and philosophy rest. The challenge, then, remained the following: how to conceive a theory of the symbol that would critically account for Warburg's "polarity in action"; how to demonstrate, in other words, the condition of possibility of "the divinatory workings of the astrologer's mind," wherein "these two processes act as a single primitive tool that he can use both to make measurements and to work magic"; and how to do so, finally, without resorting to chronological or teleological devices. If the uni-

verse of the symbolic form could be said to encompass expression and form, proximity and distance, and irrationality and rationality all at once, then the movement within this cosmos could not be described in the chronological fashion of this precedes or follows that; instead, it would have to be conceived in an oscillating rhythm of this and that, that and this. Only in this way could Warburg's theory of the symbol be unified within a logical, rather than a psychological, system, one that would also unite the poles of the symbol "as the pivots of one vibrant, primordial state."

Warburg abandoned his studies of the Pueblo Indians shortly after his return to Hamburg, and his theoretical essay on the symbol several years later. In 1897 he married, moved to Florence, and turned his attention to the visual culture of the early Florentine Renaissance.

## Cassirer's Philosophical Foundation

As if in answer to Warburg's admonition, in 1920 Cassirer began a series of investigations of the symbolic form that not only demonstrate "a polarity in action" but also provide a philosophical foundation for Warburg's own attempts to define the symbol psychologically. Choosing to imprison himself in the Warburg Library rather than to avoid it altogether, Cassirer found therein "not merely a collection of books but a collection of problems."[93] Cassirer admitted that the problems Warburg had been researching were close to his own, although, he adds, they had already "concerned him for a long time." The arrangement of the books on the shelves revealed to Cassirer how the same "problems" coursed through disciplines that were normally separated. If the problem of the symbolic form could likewise be seen in such an expansive compass, then, Cassirer ventured, perhaps an underlying principle could be found that would link the various aspects of the symbolic form into philosophical coherence. While Cassirer would go on to refine his ideas of the symbolic form, writing separately on language, myth, and the phenomenology of knowledge in three magisterial volumes published between 1923 and 1929, the essential features of his conception are found in his Warburg Library lecture of 1921.[94]

Through his reading of the books in the library and Warburg's early writings on the symbol, including the 1920 essay "Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther," Cassirer became aware that the symbolic form, in all its dialectical potency, could not be considered from a fixed epistemological point of view. In his 1910 study of the substance and function of scientific concepts, and even more forcefully in

*Einstein's Theory of Relativity,* a book that had just appeared in print, Cassirer demonstrated how the epistemological is historical: Just as Einstein's theory of relativity "engaged on a fundamental level with the form of the general theory of knowledge, offering it new fullness and more fruitful tasks," so philosophy needed to find its own theory of relativity, a mode of analysis based on principles that would be both fixed and flexible.[95] Interestingly enough, it was in his 1920 book on Einstein, a study of the most recent research in modern physics, where Cassirer introduced a concept of the symbolic form that encompassed the natural and cultural sciences. Warburg's early writings and the resources of his library then laid the groundwork for Cassirer to develop his ideas.[96]

Cassirer began considering how to inscribe the symbolic form with a philosophy of history. This required two simultaneous registers: on the one hand, in order to have a history at all, the symbolic form needed to be understood as embedded within history; on the other hand, the most fundamental aspect of the symbolic form—the aspect it shared with all variety of symbolic forms and that Cassirer termed the "spiritual" or "mental" (*Geistige*) register—needed to exist apart from history, or the realm of the "empirically given," as an independent formative principle.[97] Writing on the conception of mythical thought in a 1922 essay published under the auspices of the Warburg Library, Cassirer criticized earlier philosophies of the cultural sciences for relying too heavily on the independent principle known as "systematic logic" at the expense of a deeper understanding of the meaning of the symbolic forms themselves.[98] Turning to the study of meaning, Cassirer aimed to discover the formative principle, and with it the logic of the unified system, to which all symbolic forms belonged.

Beginning with his essay of 1921, Cassirer demonstrates why his theory of knowledge extends beyond the framework of mathematical or theoretical logic to include the symbolic forms of myth, language, religion, art, and knowledge. Despite the differences in the modes of thought expressed in these forms, with a stroke of insight Cassirer recognized that all symbolic forms rest on an "inner intellectual or spiritual principle" of conception. "All concept formation, no matter in what material it occurs—whether that of 'objective' experience or that of a merely 'subjective' idea—is characterized by the fact that it includes a determinate principle of linking and ordering. Only by means of this principle can specific 'shapes,' specific formations with firm outlines and 'qualities,' be filtered out of the constant stream of impressions. The form the ordering takes thereby determines the species and genus of the concept."[99] Cassirer argues that the human mind, particularly in its capacity for imagination, offers the formative principle that transforms the perceptually or

intellectually given into ever-changing form and content. As expressions of the mind's formative capacity, myth, language, religion, art, and knowledge constitute the shaping or structuring of the world of experience. While we might value mathematical logic more highly than mythical thought, the latter nonetheless demonstrates the human capacity for "separation and unification," for "division and synthesis"—the capacity that renders experience into form and form into experience. Because intellect or spirit (*Geist*) "lives and produces" in the material of the senses itself, opposites are unified that, Cassirer notes, "would appear impossible to unify from an abstract metaphysical point of view."[100]

As he had done in his 1910 book, *Substance and Function,* in this instance Cassirer shifts the study of theoretical knowledge from an investigation of the substance of Being to one of logical order. This shift is decisive insofar as it permits the philosopher to highlight the space of experience. Noting, in a subsequent essay, how the mind's formative capacity offers "a distinctive means of separation which is at once connection," Cassirer lends philosophical coherence to the opposing poles of Warburg's psychological theory of the symbol. Instead of resorting to chronological or teleological devices in order to account for the shift from mythos to logos, Cassirer demonstrates how myth, language, religion, art, and knowledge, while distinct from one another, array themselves under the concept of the symbolic form as ways "to transform chaos into cosmos."[101] It is important to underscore that Cassirer does not cast the various symbolic forms as ideal superstructures that can be applied to perceptual reality. Rather, as he persuasively argues, one's particular viewpoint on the world determines, or orders, the content of one's perceptions. Hence, the viewpoint on the world of sensuous experience and the content of the symbolic form of that experience cannot be separated. Symbolic forms reveal, then, a dynamic process in which viewpoint and content are correlated.[102]

Warburg, in his theory of the symbolic form, had been inspired by the German Romantic Jean Paul to consider magic and logic "grafted to a single stem"; in his first lecture in the library Cassirer draws from Goethe's 1789 essay, "Simple Imitation, Manner, Style." Goethe conceives imitation, manner, and style as three interrelated yet independent ways in which the artist interacts with the natural world. "Simple imitation" means just that: Imitating nature exactly requires a psychological joining of subject and object reminiscent of the mythical or magical symbolism described earlier by Warburg in relation to the Pueblo Indians or by Vischer in his definition of the religious symbol. With "manner," which Cassirer calls "the next stage of symbolic expression," the artist begins to demonstrate his or her own language of form, and with it the spirit of the

maker is expressed. Finally, and not surprisingly, "style" reveals "the highest objectivity of the artistic spirit." Consider Cassirer as he quotes a decisive passage from Goethe's essay:

> Through imitation of nature, through the effort of creating a general language, through painstaking and thorough study of diverse subject matter, the artist finally reaches the point where he becomes increasingly familiar with the characteristic and essential features of things. He will now be able to see some order in the multiplicity of appearances and learn to juxtapose and recreate distinct and characteristic forms. Then art will have reached its highest possible level, which is style and equal to the highest achievement of mankind.[103]

In the transition from simple imitation to manner to style, the point of view of the artist shifts from near to far as artistic expression develops into a vocabulary of "distinct and characteristic forms." The possibility of an intellectual distance from the world of sensuous experience is vital for Goethe, as it is for Warburg and Cassirer.[104] In this transition, the intellect or spirit (*Geist*) of the individual likewise assumes greater power and scope. For Goethe, Cassirer argues, the concept of style is bound up with the concept of knowledge: moving from simple imitation to manner to style involves the same logical and intellectual functions that condition what I am describing as the movement from seeing to representing to knowing—if "simple imitation" and "seeing" entail proximity to the world of sensuous impressions, then "style" and "knowing" turn on the ever more precise discrimination, and logical ordering, of form and content.[105] This is Weimar classicism at its height. By 1789 Goethe had discovered a philosophical order within the oscillating dialectic of the steadfast virtues and the restless desires represented most concretely in his *Altar to Agathe Tyche,* erected beside his garden house in Weimar ten years before (fig. 9).

For Goethe, simple imitation, manner, and style are bound together conceptually. Style, defined as the ability "to see some order in the multiplicity of appearances," means that, though simple imitation and style are bound together conceptually, one can nevertheless break away from nature and impress one's own characteristic stamp on the world in the form of an image. While it could be claimed that Goethe implies a hierarchy or teleology of forms of artistic expression or points of view, his conception of the symbolic form as polar resonates most strongly in his writings. Rather than a chronological movement of this precedes or follows that, Goethe's conception of the symbol is tuned to the oscillating rhythm of this and that, that and this.[106] By offering individuality and coherence, a fixed principle and flexibility, Goethe, I want to suggest, pre-

sented a way out of the closed circuitry of the symbol in which Warburg had struggled.

Transferring Goethe's conception to his own world of ideas, Cassirer goes on to discuss Goethe's theory in relation to mythical, religious, and scientific modes of thought and the points of view with which they are correlated. Whereas the "simple imitation" of nature rests on an empirical point of view, "manner" relies on an objective viewpoint, since in this case the artist has begun to translate a natural form into a representation. Style, not surprisingly, requires an epistemological vantage point or, as Cassirer puts it variously, a transcendental or aesthetic point of view. Because these points of view are conceived together, Cassirer asserts that mythical thought contains within it the possibility of a distance from the world of sensuous experience that increases in the movement from mythical to religious to scientific modes of thought. Mythical thought therefore "has its categories," the philosopher insists.[107] If mythical thought reveals a magical notion of causality, it also intimates the direction causality can take in scientific thought, where the concept of causality is demonstrated through the powers of intellectual analysis alone. This was the hallmark of Einstein's achievement. To quote Cassirer, the theory of relativity "represents the style of modern physics."[108] Einstein, after all, had found order in a cosmos more chaotic than Goethe dared imagine.

## Lecture on the Serpent Ritual

Turning now to 1923 and to Warburg's lecture on the Pueblo Indians, we find the influence of Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms.[109] On his trip to the Southwest twenty-seven years earlier, Warburg did not observe the snake dance of the Pueblo Indians, and in two lectures he gave to German photographic societies shortly after his return from America, the snake dance is an incidental feature.[110] In the lecture delivered to the audience in the sanatorium, however, the snake dance is the essential element.[111] Warburg begins:

> The dance is at once an animal dance and a religious, seasonal dance. . . . Whereas . . . the corn dance achieves the demonic representation of corn demons only with masks, we find here in Walpi a far more primeval aspect of the magic dance.
>
> Here the dancers and the live animal form a magical unity, and the surprising thing is that the Indians have found in these dance ceremonies a way of handling the most dangerous of all animals, the rattlesnake, so that it can be tamed without violence, so that the creature will participate willingly—or at least without making use of its aggressive abilities, unless pro-

> voked—in ceremonies lasting for two days. This would surely lead to catastrophe in the hands of Europeans.[112]

At "once an animal dance and a religious, seasonal dance," the serpent ritual of the Pueblo Indians is a dance of shifting viewpoints in which the snake is at once corporally ingested and considered as a symbolic form. As the Native American grips the snake in his hand, so he also grasps its symbolic power, a power that extends beyond the physical body of the snake to encompass its magical association with lightning. Treating the snake as at once a dangerous reptile and a propitious symbol—as simultaneously this and that—the dancers quell their so-called primitive fear of the serpent as they use it as a means toward their own symbolic ends.

Warburg invokes the comparative approach of anthropology and the classics as he now begins to describe how "two thousand years ago in the very cradle of our own European culture, in Greece, cultic habits were in vogue which in crudeness and perversity far surpass what we have seen among the Indians." In the "orgiastic cult of Dionysus," for instance, a religious dance involving blood sacrifice, the Maenads hold in their hand "the animal that was to be ripped to pieces in the ascetic sacrificial dance in honor of the god" (fig. 27). Following the dictates of "religious evolution," the serpent then participates in the "process of religious sublimation" when blood sacrifice is abandoned "as the innermost ideal of purification." In this way, as Warburg suggests, the role of the serpent can "be considered a yardstick for the changing nature of faith from fetishism to the pure religion of redemption." The transition from the physical grasp on the snake to the religious contemplation of its symbolic form echoes the movement between object and subject in Kantian aesthetic experience. In Kant's account, however, a further remove from the object is implied, as the subject concerns itself only with the mental representation, or form, of the object rather than with any concept of the (religious) object per se. For Warburg, the "idea of the serpent as a destroying force from the underworld has found its most powerful and tragic symbol in the myth and in the sculpted group of the Laocoön" (fig. 28). In the manner of a "religious evolution" in reverse, here the force of the serpent overrules the priest and his sons. The Laocoön is, then, "a symbol of ancient suffering: death at the hands of vengeful demons, without justice and without hope of redemption."[113]

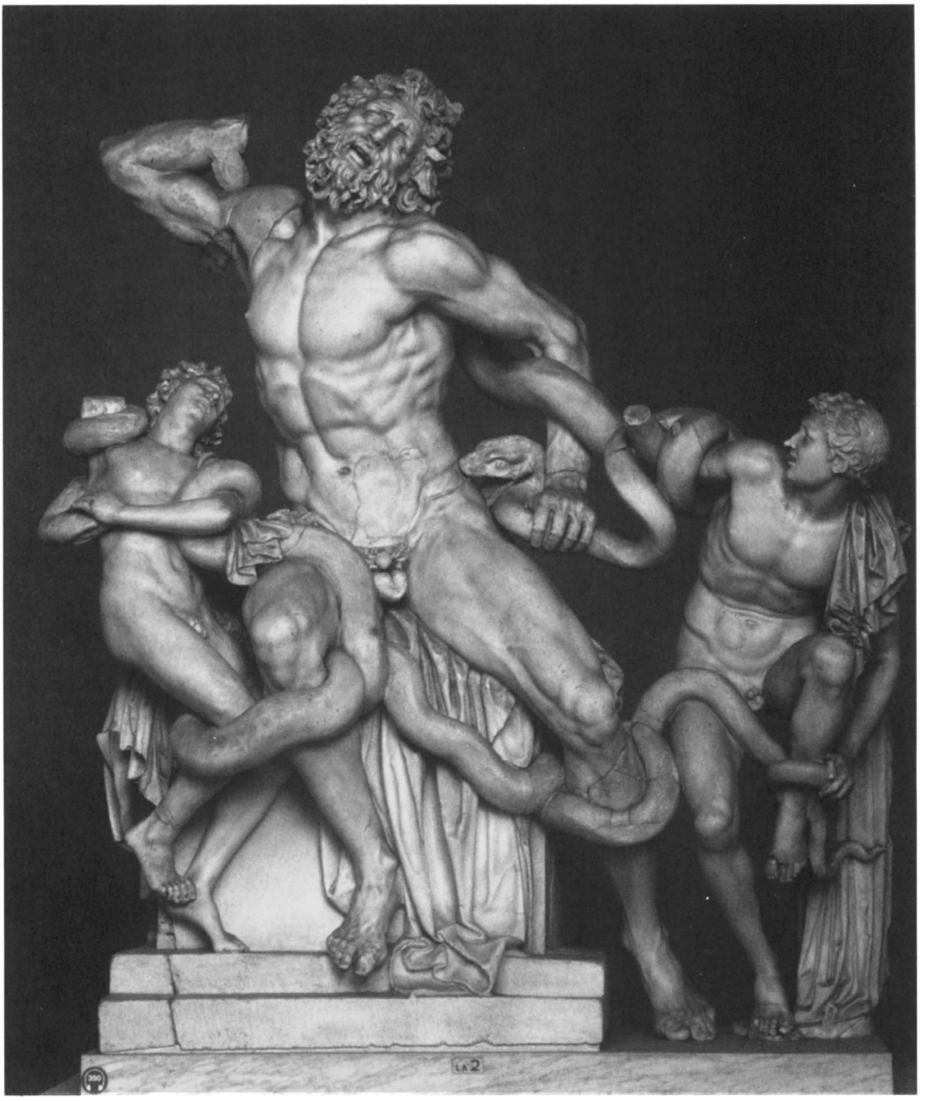
Yet the snake is not simply the bearer of destruction. In its capacity to slip out of its skin, "slipping, as it were, out of its own mortal remains," as well as in its ability to "slither into the earth and reemerge," the snake is likewise "the most natural symbol of immortality." We find this meaning of the serpent in the representation of Asclepius, "the ancient god of

27. *Dancing Maenad,* drawing after a Neo-Attic relief. In Salomon Reinach, *Répertoire de la statuaire grecque et romaine* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1897). Warburg Institute, London.

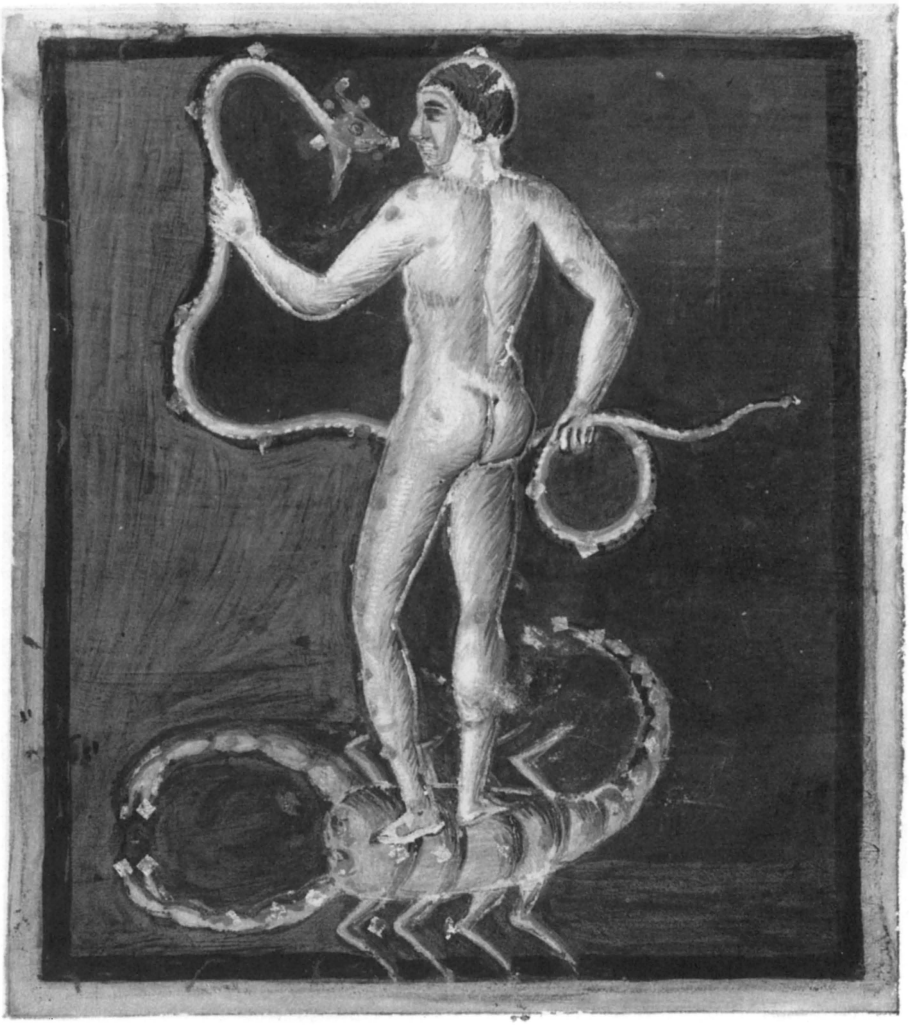
healing" who "carries a serpent coiling around his healing staff as a symbol." On a Spanish calendar leaf from the thirteenth century, which Warburg had found in the Vatican library, Asclepius "is the ruler of the month in the sign of Scorpio" (fig. 29).[114] Through "an act of cosmologic imagination," the healing god has been transformed into a "star-deity" who stands as a fixed star over Scorpio in the zodiac. "He is surrounded by serpents and is now regarded only as a heavenly body under whose influence prophets and physicians are born. Through this elevation to the stars," Warburg writes, "the serpent-god becomes a transfigured totem."

Asclepius's ascent to the stars reconfirms for Warburg the fact that, in "ancient astrology, mathematics and magic converge." The author amplifies on the elective affinity between mathematics and magic in a decisive passage.

> The serpent figure in the heavens, found also in the constellation of the Great Serpent, is used as a mathematical outline; the points of luminosity are linked together by way of an earthly image, in order to render comprehensible an infinity we cannot comprehend at all without some such outline of orientation. So Asclepius is at once a mathematical border sign and




28. *The Laocoön Group,* 1st century. Roman copy, possibly after Agesander, Thenodorus, and Polydorus of Rhodes. Archive Timothy McCarthy/Art Resource, NY.



29. *Asclepius with a Serpent*, 13th century. Spanish calendar leaf. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (MS Vossianus Leyden. Voss Lat Q 79). Leiden, University Library, ms. VLQ 79, fol. 10v.

> a fetish bearer. The evolution of culture toward the age of reason is marked in the same measure as the tangible, coarse texture of life, fading into mathematical abstraction.[115]

As "the moral law within me" provides an imaginary focus for the Kantian stargazer, and with it an orientation to the cosmos that elevates the subject out of his station as "a mere speck in the universe," so the symbolic form of the god of healing on the thirteenth-century calendar leaf serves as an "outline of orientation" for the comprehension of infinity. Whether gazing at the astrological image of Asclepius or at the night sky itself, as Goethe suggests in an epigraph to this chapter, the symbolic form of art, like the power of reason, begins and ends with a subject tied to the world of sensuous experience. From the grasp *on* the fetish to the grasp *of* the mathematical symbol, "the tangible fades into an abstraction," Warburg attests in a sentence redolent of Cassirer's own ideas. And yet, Asclepius is here conceived as "at once a mathematical border sign and a fetish bearer," as at once a logical and a mythical or religious symbol. If, as Warburg remarked at the beginning of his lecture, "the circle—the coiled serpent—is the symbol for the rhythm of time," then, he suggests in conclusion, the symbolic form itself is characterized by a polarity that permits a logic of progression and regression.

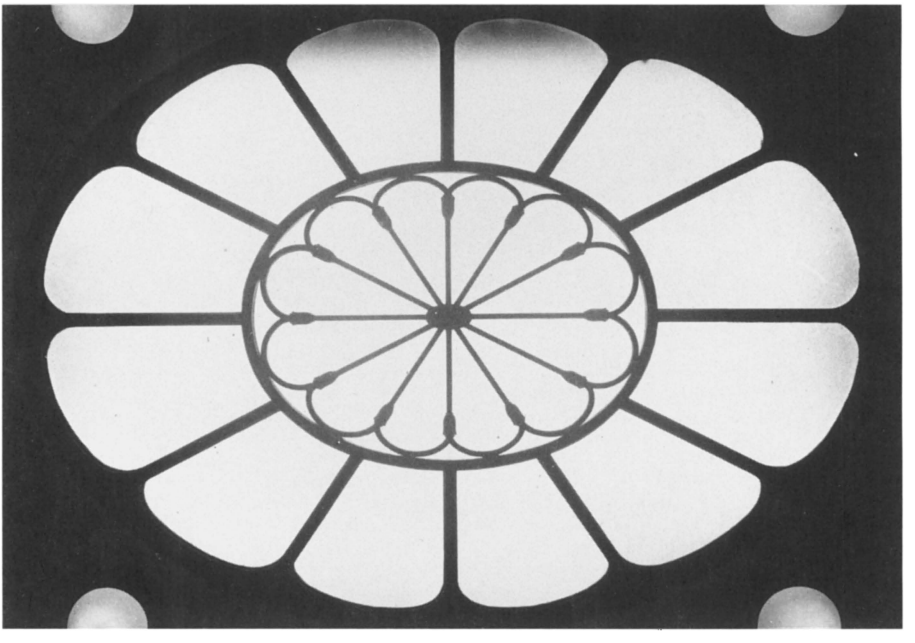
One day in 1924 Cassirer visited Warburg in Bellevue. As Fritz Saxl recounts, "the patient had prepared himself for this day for weeks and months previously." During his visit Cassirer discussed Kepler's ideas with Warburg. Saxl notes how in "the years of anguish and isolation Warburg's thoughts . . . had centered around Kepler." "Warburg had come to the conclusion, although separated from all books, that modern thought was born when Kepler broke the traditional supremacy of the circle, as the ideal form in cosmological thought, and replaced it by the ellipse. Cassirer, who never took notes but possessed a memory of almost unlimited capacity, at once came to Warburg's aid, giving chapter and verse for this idea by quoting from Kepler."[116] This conversation had a decisive impact on Warburg. Cassirer confirmed why the oscillating polarity of the symbol could make philosophical sense if it was configured as an elliptical cosmos. Unlike the circle, the geometrical figure of the ellipse offers a unified field that is, at the same time, marked by a polarity. Warburg's plans for his institute in Hamburg had included an elliptical reading room—"the traffic island of the thoughtful"—where Cassirer delivered the inaugural lecture (figs. 30 and 31).[117]

In addition to Cassirer's own visit, Saxl had sent Warburg the essays the philosopher had composed under the auspices of the Warburg Library. While Kepler was not mentioned directly in Cassirer's two essays,

30. The reading room at the Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg, Hamburg, 1926. Warburg Institute, London.

Goethe, as we have seen, was most certainly referenced. We might conjecture that Warburg and Cassirer's conversation at the sanatorium touched on Goethe's theory of the symbol, especially as the art historian and the philosopher each had a long acquaintance with the writings of the polymath from Weimar. Be that as it may, Warburg would have read of Cassirer's use of Goethe's theory of the symbol, and would have learned how important this theory was for him, by reading the philosopher's two essays for the library. Influenced by Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms, Warburg's 1923 lecture demonstrates the impact of Goethe's own ideas.

"It is a lesson from an old book: the kinship of Athens and Oraibi." In this epigraph from his 1923 lecture Warburg paraphrases Goethe. Announcing the peroration of his lecture, Warburg cites another bit of Goethiana, which he sets alongside a photograph of Hopi children in front of a cave: "If the eye were not of the sun—it could not behold the sun" (Wär nicht das Auge sonnenhaft—Die Sonne könnt' es nie



31. Oculus in the reading room at the Kulturwissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg. Warburg Institute, London.

erblicken). Whereas "the poisonous reptile symbolizes the inner and outer demonic forces that humanity must overcome," Warburg notes in his conclusion, this overcoming is marked in "a spiritualized taking of distance." Here Warburg has found his way out of the closed circuitry of the magical symbol in the manner in which Goethe and Cassirer had suggested. While magic and logic, Athens and Oraibi, the eye and the sun, remain "grafted to a single stem," that very stem is now conceived as a space of experience—a stem, a space, an interval—which offers the possibility of a separation within the dialectic.

This, I want to argue, is what Warburg's use of the German word *Nebeneinander* implies. Like the space of experience, *Nebeneinander* implies shifting points of view. Generally translated as "proximity," *Nebeneinander* connotes both proximity in space and synchrony, or simultaneity in time. Understood across the range of its meanings and in the knitting together of its conceptual landscape, *Nebeneinander* evokes the interplay of near and far, the space of experience and the simultaneity—what I would term the synchronous distance—of this and that, that and this. As we

32. Aby Warburg, "Uncle Sam in San Francisco," 1896, photograph. Warburg Institute, London.

have seen, Goethe's own breakthrough to Weimar classicism and his essay of 1789, "Simple Imitation, Manner, Style," demonstrate how a general idea may encompass a polarity. In a similar vein, I would argue that "the will to the Romantic" (*der Wille zum Romantischen*) manifested in Warburg's interest in the "wild" Southwest, or by Cassirer's fascination with the library, contains within it the physical and the conceptual grasp. Viewed in this way, "the will to the Romantic" encompasses lure and survival, sensuous experience and intellectual knowledge, the viewpoint from within and the vantage point from above.

Writing in the 1920s, which is to say after they had witnessed an un-

precedented foment of German nationalism and prowar propaganda that marked the onset of World War I, Warburg and Cassirer were convinced of the necessity of distance. Nevertheless, they conceive the symbolic form and history to be in a state of tension. If symbolic forms are created as points of orientation, as images in history, the logic of the symbol, defined by Warburg and Cassirer as a kind of synchronous distance, exists under threat of erasure or collapse. The photograph of Uncle Sam striding underneath the electric wires of San Francisco, the last illustration to Warburg's 1923 lecture, denotes such erasure (fig. 32). By "capturing electricity," "imprisoning lightning in the wire," Uncle Sam "had produced a culture with no use for paganism," with the result that Native American culture was replaced by the culture of Uncle Sam. Warburg does not view this eradication of magical cosmology by technology as a sign of progress. Instead, he offers a poignant reminder that the culture of Uncle Sam, "the culture of the machine age," likewise "destroys what the natural sciences, born of myth, so arduously achieved: the space for devotion, which evolved in turn into the space required for reflection." He continues, "The modern Prometheus and the modern Icarus, Franklin and the Wright brothers, who invented the dirigible airplane, are precisely those ominous destroyers of the sense of distance, who threatened to lead the planet back into chaos."[118] For his part, Cassirer's investigation of *The Myth of the State,* published shortly after the philosopher's death in 1945, describes how a once-reasonable German society had collapsed into myth.[119]

## Symbolic Forms and History

If the symbolic form and history are in tension, then what becomes of the power of the image in the history of art? Writing in the 1920s, Cassirer and Warburg well understood the power of the image, and in this they were not alone as contemporary scholars of art. In Warburg's initial conceptions of the symbolic form, this power was grasped all too palpably; harnessing this power in the direction of a "scientific" point of view, Cassirer provided the inner philosophical coherence absent in Warburg's own work.[120] While Cassirer might thus be likened to Warburg in his acknowledgment of a potential opposition within the symbolic form, for him this opposition is nonetheless guided by a historical, even an ethical, imperative. I shall return to this point shortly.

What are the implications for art history of Cassirer's and Warburg's theories of symbolic forms? While here I have traced the interactions of the art historian and the philosopher concerning symbolic forms, War-

burg's art theory—when viewed in its full range—does not provide a mechanism with which to anchor symbolic forms within a diachronic history of progress. As Kurt Forster persuasively argues:

> All the knowledge amassed, with beelike application, by Warburg does not add up to a picture of the past. Though all the resources of nineteenth-century historical method were at his disposal, he never made his historical investigations converge into a whole. The details that he had carefully garnered for the solution of historical problems refused to lend themselves to an overview; instead, they constantly posed new riddles. This still further reinforced the sense of estrangement with which he viewed all that was ostensibly familiar, and it led him onto the new terrain of the exploration of alien cultures.[121]

Betraying a sense of estrangement rather than resting on a transcendental point of view, Warburg's art theory has been difficult to reconcile with art history, a discipline predicated on philosophical assumptions of unity, order, and evolution more in keeping with Cassirer's neo-Kantian speculations. As we have seen, Warburg's theory of the symbol does not highlight continuity so much as discontinuity through time, a discontinuity that rests on the polarity of the symbol itself. As a result, Warburg's symbolic forms do not evolve in history so much as migrate through it. The most powerful demonstration of this migration lies in Warburg's picture atlas, a European "memory of images" that the art historian was working on until his death in 1929.[122]

As Cassirer sets the symbolic form in history, so he understands intellect or spirit (*Geist*), "the totality of possible ways of giving form or meaning," as residing in a register beyond empirical history. In this sense, *Geist* functions in Cassirer's philosophy as reason does in Kant's enterprise—*Geist* and reason, as mental faculties, indicate the subject's tie to the world of sensuous experience. At the same time, *Geist* and reason provide the subject with a point of view beyond perception. According to Cassirer, the meaning of *Geist* cannot be given to us in an "Archimedean point of certitude outside of it"; rather, "this [point of view] must always be sought within it." As the philosopher makes clear, the mind cannot step outside its own circle in order to know itself. Nevertheless, the mind forever reaches beyond itself. In notes for a fourth volume of his philosophy, *The Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms,* Cassirer explains this in an elegant passage:

> The mind cannot peel off, like snakeskins, the forms in which it lives and exists, in which it not only thinks but also feels and perceives, sees and gives shape to things. It cannot, by a kind of organic metamorphosis, enter into

> another level of essence and life different from the one it is in. Yet as little as the mind can ever in reality alienate itself from its basic form, so neither is it on the other hand ever completely bound to this basic form; it is not confined to this as by prison walls. . . . "Intelligence" is the mind's capacity to take everything it creates, what it brings forth from its womb, and assume a negative attitude toward it. It does not simply "exist" in its products but rather asks about what is beyond them and even asks this in order to turn against and oppose them.[123]

If Cassirer had previously defined the symbolic form as the outcome of a dialectic of life and spirit (*Geist*), in these notes he indicates that the substance and function of *Geist* is the condition of possibility of a philosophy of history. As *Geist* reflects on its own symbolic forms, so it approaches or opposes these forms from a new point of view. Simultaneously productive and reflective, *Geist* underlies sensuous experience and intellectual or spiritual form. At once experience and form, at once this and that, *Geist*, I would argue, renders the conceptual space of synchronous distance of Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms.

As *Geist* is understood as polar, so is Cassirer's philosophy of history. In accounting for the production of symbolic forms, *Geist* indicates the subject's tie to sensuous experience as it operates in a sphere of immediacy, seeking to capture—or orient—the full measure of life in form. In accounting for the ways the mind incessantly inquires into "what is beyond" its own products, *Geist*, at the same time, indicates the possibility of objective and transcendental points of view. In Cassirer's conception, *Geist*—and so the subject him- or herself—resides simultaneously in the historical moment and beyond it. *Geist* thus allows for both a certain immediacy and the distance necessary for recollection, historical narrative, and a philosophy of history.

As we have seen, Warburg's theory of the symbol at once permits and denies the distance between past and present moments required for recollection, historical narrative, and a philosophy of history. Cassirer's theory of symbolic forms, on the other hand, and especially his conception of *Geist*, demonstrate how distance, reflection, and recollection are constitutive to the process of symbolic formation. Focusing on the manner in which Cassirer marshals his philosophy of symbolic forms in a direction from mythos to logos, previous scholars have often missed the way his theory of the symbol accounts for the movement between proximity and distance, for the simultaneous dance of experience and form. Investing *Geist* with the ability to reflect on itself and its forms, Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms is tuned to an ethical imperative. In *The Myth of the State* the philosopher poignantly demonstrates why the loss of reflection constitutes a kind of totalitarianism. If theory begins with looking, then

here the individual is called upon to ponder what she sees in order to better comprehend the world in which she lives.

While processes of recollection—the putting together of the past—give rise to the narratives of art and its history, individual experience and remembrance are the domain of the subject in history. Encompassing form and experience, symbolic forms function as signs of remembrance. At the same time, the symbolic forms of myth, language, religion, art, and knowledge "become the 'monuments,'" Cassirer writes, "the signs of remembrance and recollection of humanity."[124] Just as Cassirer's conception of *Geist* encompasses the empirical, objective, and transcendental points of view, so symbolic forms can be considered from a range of perspectives. Individual and cultural, telling of their makers and their times, symbolic forms are sustained through narratives of cultural memory. Warburg, with his understanding of the power of the image, permits symbolic forms to remain alive in their historicity. Cassirer, underscoring the productive and reflective capacities of *Geist*, offers the philosophical turn as a process of salutary recollection.[125]

In order to orientate the image within a narrative of personal, historical, cultural, or philosophical memory, recollection draws the image away from the empirical point of view. The power of the image thus no longer depends on an immediacy of individual response; it rests rather on the mediation of the image through a framework of memory. In the following chapter we will investigate aspects of memory and history in the writings of Alois Riegl and Walter Benjamin. Benjamin, especially keen to preserve a space for meaningful experience within what appeared to him as flattened and regularized spaces of modernity and its diversions, sought to reinvigorate the power of the image for the individual. Attending to the beholder's response to the image, we will follow Riegl and Benjamin as they contemplate the experience of time and the time of history.

Chapter Four

# *The Experience of Time and the Time of History*

## Riegl's Age Value and Benjamin's Aura

> Of what essential worth is the familiarity with a monument as an historical fact? . . . Even the historical is not an absolute category, and for the scholar, not only knowing per se, but also the knowing-how-to-ignore certain facts at the right moment may well have its advantage.
>
> Alois Riegl

> The history that showed things "as they really were" was the strongest narcotic of the century.
>
> Walter Benjamin

According to the Austrian art historian Alois Riegl (1858–1905), "the historical is not an absolute category." Moving aside from the powerful ranks of the nineteenth-century German historical school, he makes this point indelibly clear: attending to the past should entail "not only knowing per se," but also "knowing-how-to-ignore certain facts at the right moment."[1] For Riegl, apparently, it was time to ignore history—the leading historical methods of his own time as well as the suite of objects and facts ratified by the contemporary art-historical enterprise. Riegl was not alone in registering a dissatisfaction with knowing per se. As a participant in the German Students' Reading Society at the University of Vienna (Der Leseverein der deutschen Studenten Wiens), a popular and politically motivated group, Riegl would have been exposed to the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The emphasis these philosophers

place on emotion, ideas of community, and the redemptive capacity of the arts had special resonance for disaffected youth living in a rational-scientific, materialistic society.[2] If the discipline of history reveled in knowledge per se, Riegl recognized "the importance of feeling as a culturally motivating factor," and it was this insight—among others—that enabled him to transform history as an absolute category into a careful research of the relative values and meanings of a wide range of aesthetic objects.[3]

The German literary and cultural critic Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was a student leader of the German Youth Movement during the years preceding World War I. In this capacity he vocally criticized the constraints and complacency of German society, including what he considered to be ineffective pedagogy, only to witness the idea of an autonomous youth commandeered by an overweening nationalist rhetoric.[4] As the sentiments of youth were channeled into the chords of an imposing nationalism, so traditional history writing gathered the elements of the past into the structure of an "objective" narrative. Benjamin, exhibiting his own destructive character, took aim at the way history offered up the past in tidy narrative form. "History decays into images not into stories," he writes.[5] Like Nietzsche, Benjamin conceived of history writing as *interpretation*.[6] Emphasizing the single image rather than the construction of a developmental narrative, his historical practice aims to account for the character—and the experience—of past and present.

The effects of systematic history writing in the nineteenth-century are remarkably similar to Benjamin's description of the shock defense: "Perhaps the special achievement of the shock defense," he remarks, "is the way it assigns an incident a precise moment in time in consciousness, at the cost of the integrity of the incident's contents." Just as German historical science aimed to capture the past "as it really was," so it endeavored to link the elements of the past to the time and space of their origin.[7] Although historical science labored under the auspices of the greatest possible objectivity, according to Benjamin it achieved this goal by muting—or even evacuating—the character of past and present. Obscuring the unsettled or unsettling texture of the past enabled historians to transform the elements of the past into facts or objects of knowledge. As Benjamin says of the shock defense, this "would be a peak achievement of the intellect; it would turn the incident into an isolated experience."[8] Focusing on the beholder's experience of past *and* present, Benjamin sought to counter this muting of the character of his own time and time past with an expanded concept of experience and a new mode of historical perception.

If the discipline of history had made great strides in the nineteenth century in Germany—borrowing from the natural sciences the principle

of causality, for instance, in order to marshal the elements of the past into orderly chains of cause and effect—the achievements of objectivity nevertheless served to separate the past from the experience of the present-day individual.[9] And just as the protocols of objectivity rendered the past into a unified field of inquiry, this sanctioned way of seeing determined which aspects of the past were available for study in the present. Responding critically to this state of affairs, Riegl and Benjamin offered new methods and objects for the study of history. Putting pressure on the achievements of historical objectivity, Riegl and Benjamin emphasized the individual perception and experience of the beholder; countering the dominance of the faculty of reason, they focused on the ways emotion and memory figure in aesthetic and historical experience. In doing so, they sought to fill out the contours of the past as well as give shape to an expanded experience of the past in the present.

A certain urgency permeates the historical practices of Riegl and Benjamin. Reading between the lines of their texts, one feels the tide of modernity churning. The French poet Paul Valéry eloquently captured this modern tumult—a movement both physical and psychological—with these words: "For the last twenty years, neither matter nor space nor time has been what it was from time immemorial."[10] Working assiduously in the name of history even as the acceleration of time that marked modernity threatened to put the past under erasure, Riegl and Benjamin lend new meaning to the experience of time and the time of history. It is important to note that Riegl and Benjamin did not dispense with history. Rather, their attentiveness to the neglected, the misbegotten, and the stranded in history, together with their resistance to the nineteenth-century practice of history, enabled them to understand the image as historical in new and deeper ways.

For his part, Benjamin reflected "on the way in which works of art relate to historical life." Proceeding "from the conviction that there is no such thing as art history," he dispensed with the customary chronological and conceptual devices for embedding aesthetic objects in history. Instead, he favored an "intensive process of interpretation," a process which included the study of changing modes of perception and the relation of the image to the beholder.[11] In this respect he was influenced by Riegl. In his 1903 essay "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin," Riegl trained his attention on possible subjective experiences of a monument—through time and in time—rather than on the enduring monumentality of so-called intentional monuments. Particularly insightful is Riegl's neologism "age value," a term the author developed in order to account for the perceptual and emotional effects of processes of decay. This chapter explores Riegl's age value and Benjamin's concep-

tions of the aura.[12] I argue that, as occasions of temporal rupture, age value and the aura resist the subsuming of the past into fixed narratives in the present.

In a curriculum vita drafted in 1928, Benjamin described his aim as "a programmatic attempt to bring about a process of integration in scholarship—one that will increasingly dismantle the rigid partitions between the disciplines that typified the concept of the sciences of the nineteenth century—and to promote this through an analysis of the work of art."[13] Benjamin's scholarly intentions clearly resonate with those of Warburg. Focusing his research on intervals and "marginal domains," Warburg moved well beyond the purview of art history.[14] Yet it is to Riegl that Benjamin directs his praise. In the following sentence he compares his attempt to Riegl's own art-historical practice, which "regard[s] the work of art as an integral expression of the religious, metaphysical, political, and economic tendencies of its age, unconstrained by any territorial concepts."[15] In order to study the work of art in the most expansive compass of the age in which it was produced, Riegl and Benjamin began by focusing exclusively on the object itself. From attentiveness to the object came new insights about the work and the time and place from which it arose, insights that required the setting aside of assumptions—of value, style, and so forth—which had relegated these objects, whether by omission or commission, to the dustbin of art history. For Riegl and Benjamin, in other words, theory begins with looking at the overlooked.

In "Experience and Poverty," an essay of 1933, Benjamin offers a memorable description of his own times. The particular poignancy of the essay is announced in the opening paragraphs. As in Panofsky's portrayal of the aged Kant, Benjamin begins with a deathbed scene. Yet where Panofsky underlines the triumph of Kant's moral law over the mortality of the philosopher's own decaying body, Benjamin's opening vignette commences on a high note but offers no ultimate repair. Here, as elsewhere, he accentuates the condition of loss that marks modernity, as he diagnoses its central features.

> Our childhood anthologies used to contain the fable of the old man who, on his deathbed, fooled his sons into believing that there was treasure buried in the vineyard. They would only have to dig. They dug, but found no treasure. When autumn came, however, the vineyard bore fruit like no other in the whole land. They then perceived that their father had passed on a valuable piece of experience: the blessing lies in hard work and not in gold. Such lessons in experience were passed on to us, either as threats or as kindly pieces of advice, all the while we were growing up: "Still wet behind the ears, and he wants to tell us what's what!" "You'll find out [*erfahren*] soon enough!" Moreover, everyone knew precisely what experience

> was: old people had always passed it on to younger ones. It was handed down in short form to sons and grandsons, with the authority of the age, in proverbs; with an often long-winded eloquence, as tales; sometimes as stories from foreign lands, at the fireside. —Where has it all gone? Who still meets people who really know how to tell a story? Where do you still hear words from the dying that last, and that pass from one generation to the next like a precious ring? Who can still call on a proverb when he needs one? And who will even attempt to deal with young people by giving them the benefit of their experience?
>
> No, this much is clear: experience has fallen in value, amid a generation which from 1914 to 1918 had to experience some of the most monstrous events in the history of the world. Perhaps this is less remarkable than it appears. Wasn't it noticed at the time how many people returned from the front in silence? Not richer but poorer in communicable experience? . . . For never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly: strategic experience has been contravened by positional warfare; economic experience, by inflation; physical experience, by hunger; moral experiences, by the ruling powers. A generation that had gone to school in horse-drawn streetcars now stood in the open air, amid a landscape in which nothing was the same except the clouds and, at its center, in a force field of destructive torrents and explosions, the tiny, fragile human body.[16]

Writing in the wake of World War I and the failure of German social democracy, Benjamin could not help but observe the pastness of the past. For a "generation that had gone to school in horse-drawn streetcars," the reality of technological and trench warfare revealed the fragility of the human body, as it marked the end of an older mode of life. Like Warburg, who had registered the danger of technological progress in the erosion of the distance necessary for thought and reflection, Benjamin, in an arresting image, evokes the effects of technological warfare on the human body. As "the tiny, fragile human body" caught in "a force field of destructive torrents and explosions" evokes the quantitative effect of war, the decimation of a generation, so the erosion of authentic experience suggests the qualitative effect of war, the poverty of experience Benjamin diagnoses in his 1933 essay.

For Benjamin, "Every present day is determined by the images that are synchronic with it: each 'now' is the now of a particular recognizability."[17] Recognizing the disorganization of the synchronous at the heart of his own present, in "Experience and Poverty" he presents an image of destruction potent enough to carry the charge of his claim for a historical, political, and philosophical break with the past. If the pastness of the past announced itself to him through a disjunction in the experience of time, then the time of experience appeared to him as divided between an older,

authentic mode of experience (*Erfahrung*) and the lived experience (*Erlebnis*) of contemporary life.[18] In addition to marking a rupture in the experience of time and the time of experience, the technological nihilism of World War I revealed the breakdown of rational history as progress, an idea derived from an Enlightenment philosophy of history.

The fracturing of experience Benjamin evokes in the opening paragraphs of his 1933 essay through the loss of the ability to tell a story, or to formulate authentic experience in tales or parables, reflects a fragmentation of historical consciousness. Insistently, even urgently perhaps, he asks, "What is the value of all our culture if it is divorced from experience?" He answers that without recourse to authentic experience, culture offers merely "a poverty of human experience in general." Instead of seeking refuge in historicism, which is to say in the idea of history as progress or in the simulation of a more authentic past, Benjamin looks to the future as he indicates the way poverty of experience forces one "to start from scratch; to make a new start; to make a little go a long way." "Among the great creative spirits," he perceptively observes, "there have always been the inexorable ones who begin by clearing a tabula rasa."[19]

Like so many intellectuals of his generation, then, Benjamin interpreted the war "in terms of the collapse of Western culture and the triumph of technology and civilization." By war's end, Anson Rabinbach notes, it was "justified to speak of the 'caesura of 1918.'"[20] Addressing the present as a literary and cultural critic, Benjamin sought a method that would enable him to write from the point of view of this caesura—this cleavage in modernity. Benjamin's declaration that "history decays into images, not into stories" not only indicates the central place of the image in his thinking; it also intimates the loss of the ability to tell stories that he singles out as a feature of the poverty of experience in his 1933 essay. On a philosophical register, Benjamin's statement implies a divide between seeing, representing, and knowing.

If the Enlightenment belief in history as the progressive unfolding of the rational squared neatly with the emplotment of events in "objective" historical narratives,[21] then the caesura of 1918 demanded a reconceptualization of the relationship between event and epistemology, on the one hand, and image and historical representation on the other hand. In the words of Rabinbach, the caesura of 1918 offered not so much a zero hour (*Stunde Null*) as an abyss, "a kind of negative ground for philosophical reflection . . . from which historical progress, the autonomy of the self-reflecting ego, and even language itself are deprived of a secure foundation."[22] Well before 1918 Kant had defined the sublime "as an abyss in which reason threatens to lose itself."[23] Yet Kant presses the potential chaos of sensuous experience into the service of a systematic, rational cos-

mos. The occasion of the sublime, I have argued, results in a triumph of reason over internal and external nature. Writing from within the caesura of 1918, Benjamin evokes the abyss as a divide between past and present, involuntary and voluntary memory, authentic and lived experience, image and historical representation. While Benjamin admired the systematicity of Kant's philosophy, he nevertheless criticized the philosopher's intellectual sublimation of experience and his meliorist vision of history.

Benjamin's critique of Kant turned, in part, on the philosopher's conception of the image. Kant's three *Critiques* place primacy on the mental image, as representation, over any object in the world. Recall how the philosopher, in the second *Critique,* uses the experience of the starry skies to chart the movement from seeing to representation to pure thought. Whereas Kantian experience encompasses seeing and representing, Benjamin sites the image in the interval between seeing and representation—in the interval of memory, in the space where reality does not yet have a name or a name does not yet have a reality. Conceived as a lightning flash rather than through a contemplation of the heavens, the image is defined by Benjamin as an ephemeral experience that resounds in the body of the subject as a shock, shudder, or intimation.

Images in Benjamin's sense defy ready representation or inscription. Nevertheless, it is the critic's task to give shape to these images. "In the fields with which we are concerned," Benjamin writes, "knowledge comes only in lightning flashes. The text is the long roll of thunder that follows."[24] Benjamin captures the image in the text as a thought figure or constellation. The fleeting time of these images as well as the precise yet allusive nature of Benjamin's texts accords with an experience of modernity in flux—a sense of modernity as sited, one might say, between seeing and representation or, as Baudelaire put it in a well-known phrase, between the contingent and the immutable.[25]

Benjamin was not alone in discovering modernity in new modes of temporality, memory, and experience. As Valéry makes clear, senses of time accelerating and transitoriness were very much part of the time-consciousness of turn-of-the-century Europe, as industrial progress, circuits of capitalism, and life in the metropolis altered or eclipsed existing forms of material and psychological life.[26] Accordingly, for Benjamin—as for Baudelaire, Proust, and Kafka, in their own ways—"'modernity' is no mere name for a chunk of historical time and the social forms that happen to have occupied it. Modernity designates, instead, a temporal structure of experience, a part of a phenomenology of historical consciousness."[27] Benjamin's essay "Experience and Poverty" demonstrates the ways his conception of the temporality of modernity is intertwined

with memory, experience, and historical consciousness, as it acknowledges modernity as a form of loss or forgetting.

In his *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* of 1817, Hegel had distinguished two types of memory: *Gedächtnis* and *Erinnerung*.[28] By *Gedächtnis* (voluntary memory) Hegel means exterior or conscious memory, productive memory that can be voluntarily recalled. For Hegel, *Gedächtnis* is reminiscent of thinking itself. In contrast to voluntary memory, Hegel's use of the word *Erinnerung* implies a deeper, interiorizing or involuntary memory that lies forgotten and must be (re)called to mind. The symbols the philosopher employs in order to figure the interiorizing memory are the mine and the well, shafts whose depths can be penetrated but whose contents can never be perceived in their fullness.[29] If *Gedächtnis* is best translated as "memory" or "reminiscence," *Erinnerung* is better defined through the connotations of the word "remembrance." In what follows I will translate Hegel's understanding of *Erinnerung* as either "involuntary memory" or "interiorizing remembrance." As we shall see, "interiorizing remembrance" is the more suitable translation for Benjamin's conception of *Erinnerung*.

Preceding Freud by more than a century, Hegel notes the way voluntary and involuntary memory are at odds with one another as, in the temporal flow of memory, they continuously inscribe what is effaced and efface what is inscribed. Recall that Warburg, writing at the turn of the century, theorized the origins of the symbol in the rendering of a differentiating contour. For Hegel, on the contrary, the images of interiorizing remembrance are figureless in a double sense: these images are transitory and they exist without a differentiating contour. Involuntary memories, Hegel contends, can never be fully present since their material remains immaterial, fleeting or, at best, distorted. As a consequence, calling these memories to mind, making them conscious as memory or thought, cannot be done without altering their original form.[30] Conceiving of the images of involuntary remembrance as simultaneously present and absent, Hegel thereby notes the way these transitory images are interiorized and remembered, how they are, as he puts it, "unconsciously preserved," despite the fact that, as figureless images, they exist without standing out in relief.

In his attempt to retrieve the traces of the past lost to the information of voluntary memory, Proust confronted "involuntary memory with a voluntary memory, one that is in the service of the intellect."[31] Unlike Proust, Benjamin understands interiorizing remembrance as "a Penelope work of forgetting," a labor in which the information in voluntary memory, however securely imprinted, is continuously subject to dissolution.[32]

For Benjamin, then, as for Hegel, the contents of interiorizing remembrance exist as figureless images. At the same time, however, Benjamin draws out the connotations of Hegel's definition by conceiving of interiorizing remembrance—of the individual *and* the collective—as bound together in voluntary memory. For Benjamin, calling interiorized memories to mind is an operation that links the individual to tradition and prehistory, aspects of the collective past that had been displaced in more recent times. Notwithstanding his admiration for Proust's literary achievement, Benjamin was inspired by how Baudelaire's correspondences (*correspondances*) place the accent on a collective prehistory.

The German language also contains two words for experience: *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*. *Erlebnis* (lived experience) occurs in fleeting chronological time. Akin to the information of voluntary memory, lived experiences are added to the corpus of experiences that mark one's life as a succession of events. In contrast to the fleeting time of lived experience, authentic experience (*Erfahrung*) occurs in abiding time. For Benjamin, authentic experience traverses the course of time and memory. As he puts it, "But it is experience [*Erfahrung*] that accompanies one to the far reaches of time, that fills and articulates time."[33] In this way, authentic experience coincides with Benjamin's understanding of interiorizing remembrance, since in each case "contents of the individual past combine in memory with material from the collective past."[34] Unlike lived experience, which is directly tied to a conscious event or a particular experience, authentic experience abides in memory traces that nestle in the folds of the fan of conscious memory.[35] Situated there, authentic experience "becomes part of the subject's psychological constitution and lingers on as unconscious memory until it is called into being as a state of mind."[36] It follows that whereas lived experience and voluntary memory occur within history and historical time, authentic experience and involuntary remembrance occur in what Benjamin calls "historyless" time—a time outside "the sequence of the days."[37]

According to Benjamin, the cleavage in modernity not only severed the continuum of memory, it also altered the structure of experience. In "Experience and Poverty" and "The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nicolai Leskov," he examines how the demise of storytelling marks the loss of a tradition that had comprised voluntary and involuntary memory.[38] As he would make explicit in his essay of 1936, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," here Benjamin demonstrates the effects on the individual of shifts in cultural modes of transmission—in this case, the transition from a culture of storytelling to a novel reading public. The author studies the transformation from a communal tradition of storytelling to the private consumption of the

book, arguing that with the advent of modernity, with the rise of the novel, the interiorized memory becomes stranded in the individual rather than communicated more broadly through oral traditions.[39] Echoing the opening lament of "Experience and Poverty," Benjamin thus underlines how the loss of tradition separates the individual—and individual memory—from a collective past. Set beside this, Baudelaire's and Proust's efforts to recover what had been lost, like the energy Kafka expended in order to register this modern condition, appear as inevitable responses to what the nineteenth century had wrought.

Charting the differences between historicism and Benjamin's historical method, Peter Osborne observes:

> If [as Benjamin contends] "memory creates the chain of tradition" and historiography is "the record kept by memory," [then] the shattering of the chain, the breakdown of memory, will set off an historiographic crisis. . . . "Historicism" responds to this crisis, to the amnestic temporality of modernity, with the twin ideas of historiography as a *science* and history as *progress:* historiography as the science of progress. In the process, it trades remembrance for the re-establishment of continuity between past and future, in a newly abstract, merely chronological form.[40]

In contradistinction to the chronological form of "historiography as a science of progress," Benjamin, like Warburg, sought to discover continuities of past and present that were not merely chronological. He identified rupture and transitoriness as hallmarks of modernity, and he placed these conditions at the center of his conception of history. The result was a historical practice that singled out ephemeral experience for especial attention.

Benjamin's essay of 1918, "On the Program of the Coming Philosophy," outlines his intention to provide a critical accounting for ephemeral experience.[41] In contrast to Kant's intellectual sublimation of experience, Benjamin's concept of experience encompasses humankind's "intellectual and psychological connection with the world, which takes place in the realms not yet penetrated by cognition."[42] Seeking to justify ephemeral experience with the same critical assurance with which Kant had secured his own Enlightenment understanding of experience, Benjamin argues that fleeting images offer the condition of possibility of remembrance of "the continuum of memory"—that capacious fan of voluntary and involuntary memory, of lived and authentic experience, that modernity had rent asunder.[43]

Monuments, memorials, and voluntary memories warn or remind us of a particular event, person, or moment from the past. I want to argue that Riegl's observations on the age value of the monument, and Ben-

jamin's conceptions of the aura of a natural scene or an aesthetic object, evoke the transitory, figureless images of interiorizing remembrance. Calling on the interiorized memory, Riegl and Benjamin bring to light images that are doubly absent: absent from historical perception and knowledge, but also absent from the voluntary memory of the present. In this way, Riegl's age value and Benjamin's aura offer occasions for authentic experience (*Erfahrung*) and involuntary remembrance (*Erinnerung*). In these aesthetic experiences images of the past awaken and yet, as Hegel makes clear, these images cannot be integrated into voluntary memory without distortion. If what has been lost "cannot attain its original status," then Riegl's age value and Benjamin's aura are ephemeral experiences, occasions in which, to borrow the words of Hegel, images "are ours only *in a formal way.*"[44] In this sense, age value and the aura are reminiscent of the correspondences of Baudelaire.

For Benjamin, Baudelaire's correspondences are "the data of recollection—not historical data, but data of prehistory." Citing Baudelaire's sonnet "La Vie antérieure" ("Previous Existence"), he continues: "The images of caves and vegetation, of clouds and waves which are evoked at the beginning of this second sonnet rise from the warm vapor of tears—tears of homesickness. . . . What is past murmurs in the *correspondances,* and the canonical experience of them has its place in a previous life."[45] What Baudelaire's second sonnet evokes is an irretrievable past, a past approached with tears that signal a longing for return. Here, nature is the location of the previous life as well as the site of involuntary remembrance. Benjamin remarks on the way "'*la vie antérieure*' opens a temporal abyss within things," whereas "solitude opens a spatial abyss before the human being."[46] Described by Benjamin as "a strange weave of space and time," the aura discloses this spatial and temporal abyss as a distance within presence. Like Baudelaire's correspondences, the experience of age value and the aura turn on an unbridgeable distance and an emotional response.

Baudelaire entrances us and yet, importantly, his evocation of prehistory or past life does not succumb to myth. If, for Benjamin, myth signals a merging of being and signifying as well as a sensuous totality, then Baudelaire's sonnet, like his own conceptions of the aura, allegory, and the dialectical image, abstains "from the comfortable route of myth."[47] Pacing the frontiers of thought, brooding, Benjamin aims to blast apart myth and to disperse totality. In this way his conceptions of the aura, allegory, and the dialectical image resonate with his philosophy of history. In "Central Park," the author comments on "the way the 'enshirement,' or apologia . . . cover[s] up the revolutionary moments in the course of history. At bottom, it seeks to establish continuity. It sets store only by

those elements of a work which have already emerged and played a part in its reception. It ignores the peaks and crags, which offer footing to those who want to move beyond this view."[48]

Moving beyond the customary objects and viewpoints of art history, Benjamin, like Riegl, not only sought to open the field to new perspectives; he also aimed to challenge reigning systems of aesthetic value and the philosophy of history on which the discipline of art history depended. As we shall see, this aim entailed first and foremost the analysis of objects and periods of art deemed decadent, in decline, or otherwise unworthy of study—objects and artistic periods that violated classical standards of beauty and form. Whereas the drive toward historical continuity set "store only by those elements of a work which have already emerged and played a part in its reception," Riegl and Benjamin sought a method that would enable new elements and meanings to emerge from "unworthy" objects. In rewriting the history of these objects, in seeing them anew, they intended to unsettle their reception and their place in history.

## Benjamin Reads Riegl

In 1933 Benjamin reviewed the first volume of *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen,* a journal of essays that presented the methodology of the Vienna school of art history. Entitling his review "Rigorous Study of Art," he praised these Austrian art historians for turning away from the "eclecticism" and "the all-encompassing whole" of the nineteenth-century " understanding of art history as universal history" in favor of an investigation of the individual work of art.[49] Underlining the "rigorously monographic" nature of these essays, Benjamin observes how these scholars, in their "esteem for the insignificant," demonstrate a "willingness to push research forward to the point where even the 'insignificant'—no, precisely the insignificant—becomes significant." For Benjamin, Riegl was "the precursor of this new type of scholar."[50] Though Benjamin would absorb and transform Riegl's method, the way Riegl raised the inconspicuous material contents of an object (*Sachgehalte*) to the level of signification (*Bedeutungsgehalte*) continued to exert an influence upon him, as did Riegl's "masterly command of the transition from the individual object to its cultural and intellectual [*geistig*] function" and the "underpinnings in the philosophy of history" in his scholarship.[51]

Thomas Levin, in his introduction to "Rigorous Study of Art," suggests that Benjamin's interest in Riegl coincided with "a profound disenchantment with Heinrich Wölfflin, which can be dated quite precisely to 1915, the year Benjamin began to attend Wölfflin's university lectures in

Munich."[52] While Wölfflin's theory did offer a handy set of terms for analyzing the formal properties of an artwork, according to Benjamin he provided merely a "normal," pedestrian understanding of art. More to the point, Wölfflin missed what Benjamin considered to be "the [essential] sources which are the most inaccessible."[53] Unlike his current art history teacher, Benjamin did not study the work of art in order to describe the supposed completeness of its formal properties. Instead, he maintained that form must be analyzed and interpreted in its contradictions and incompleteness. This idea informs Benjamin's 1928 study of the neglected German mourning plays of the Baroque period, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama.*[54]

In his essay of 1915, "The Problem of Style in the Visual Arts" ("Das Problem des Stils in der bildenden Kunst"), Panofsky had also remarked on the way in which Wölfflin's theory hinged on the formal completeness of the work of art, something well-achieved through the closed circuitry of his own descriptive method.[55] Taking aim at Wölfflin's "colorless concepts," Panofsky demonstrates how "seeing, the eye, and the optical" are inherently bound up with the operations of the psyche (*Seele*). Arguing that general forms of representation *and* individual expressive content interact in the shaping of materials, Panofsky opposes Wölfflin's "double root of style." Though Benjamin and Panofsky would both find fault with Wölfflin in 1915, their criticisms differ insofar as Panofsky, stressing the role of the psyche as a priori, leveled his critique of Wölfflin on the side of the artist, arguing that perception, expression, and representation must be joined in the concept of style, just as they are joined in the creation of a work of art. Benjamin, meanwhile, searching for a method that would reveal "the [essential] sources which are the most inaccessible," considered the perception and implication of the beholder in any philosophy of history to be vital and necessary aspects in the study of aesthetic objects.

Riegl offered Benjamin a method that went well beyond what he had received in Wölfflin's lectures. Benjamin read Riegl as early as 1916, and he was particularly attracted to *Late Roman Art Industry.*[56] When Riegl's groundbreaking book appeared in 1901, the industrial forms and abstract decorative patterns of the late Roman period were measured against the canon of classical art. By this standard, late Roman works were deemed "ugly" and "lifeless," the material manifestations of a culture in decline and decay—a culture, in short, that bore no conceivable relation to the classical. On the contrary, Riegl considered late Roman arts and crafts as a turning point in their own right, an outgrowth of classical art on the one hand, and the progenitor of more modern stylistic forms on the other. In order to compose his theory of the late Roman art industry, Riegl brought two opposing viewpoints together: first, in keeping with his contempo-

raries, he recognized the ways late Roman arts and crafts disrupted the stylistic traits of previous aesthetic forms; second, in direct opposition to the reigning point of view, he placed these works in relation to the classical. This second move enabled him to "realign" objects of the late Roman art industry with the art of the past.[57] Riegl's conception of the classical as a relative rather than an eternal art value, as well as his dual focus on the artifacts themselves and on their historical and stylistic development, allowed him to place these works within a continuous history in which reversal and regression were understood as new values—or modes of progression—in their own right.[58]

In "Rigorous Study of Art" Benjamin would write in laudatory tones about *Late Roman Art Industry,* especially since "this book is one of the most striking proofs that every major scholarly discovery results in a methodological revolution of its own, without any intention to do so."[59] Unlike Wölfflin's supposedly neutral notion of seeing and his pairs of opposing concepts (linear/painterly, plane/recession, and so forth), Riegl showed how what is made visible is a vehicle of meaning—meaning "created in the act of artistic production and transmitted by the visual reading of works of art."[60] Demonstrating, in this way, a fundamental connection between forms of cultural expression and modes of perception, Riegl did not just offer a new method for the study of art. His recognition of the changing perception of makers and beholders enabled him to cast aside the eternal value of classical art and propose concepts of relative artistic value in its place.[61] As he clearly understood, "the contemporary intellectual inclination" determines one's view of the past and the aspects of the cultural past deemed worthy of study in the first place. Riegl's recognition of the relative nature of value underscored his desire for a relative formalism, one that would define "the phenomenal manifestation of objects as form and color on the plane or in space" as the rather humble element which all aesthetic objects held in common.[62]

Opening up art history to a range of artistic values required Riegl to develop a new suite of terms. At the center of these is his concept of the *Kunstwollen,* a term destined to become one of the most controversial elements of his art theory.[63] Commenting on antique art at the conclusion to *Late Roman Art Industry,* he writes: "It was the task of the arts to extract a certain quantity of individual forms out of the infinite chaos of phenomena and, by arranging them in the plane, to bind those forms into a new, clearly contained unity. In the same way, natural science in antiquity tried to untangle the confused skein of phenomena and to arrange the forms in a coherent sequence based on their lawful causal sequence."[64] As Riegl makes clear in reference to art and science, transforming chaos into cosmos was a primary task in the ancient world. The forming im-

pulse he evokes in this passage is, to my mind, what he intends by his concept of the *Kunstwollen.* The *Kunstwollen* encompasses an immanent urge to transform chaos into form as well as the individual act of forming itself, the result of which is the specific work of art or the "lawful causal sequence." "All human volition," Riegl writes, "is directed toward achieving a satisfactory relationship with the world. . . . The shaping, artistic volition regulates man's relationship with the palpable, sensible manifestation of things. It is the expression of the specific way in which man wants things to be shaped or colored."[65]

In Riegl's conception of the *Kunstwollen,* artist and aesthetic object are poised at the interface between an internal, metaphysical forming impulse and the national, cultural and stylistic exigencies of a specific historical moment. As the artist exercises her urge to create—releases her artistic free will, we might say—she responds to an impulse that exceeds her own space and time; as a historical being, however, she is nonetheless constrained by the artistic possibilities available and permitted to her during the time in which she creates. For Riegl the dynamic concept of the *Kunstwollen,* simultaneously internal and external, metaphysical and historical, accounts for the possibility of the arts as well as for stylistic continuity and change. The meaning of the *Kunstwollen* shifted for Riegl as he sought, in his late writings, to understand the factor that determined the specific appearance of a work of art, an artistic medium, or a so-called national culture. While the evolving nature of the *Kunstwollen* may be disquieting for those desirous of stable meanings, Riegl's was "not a theory from above into which the facts had to be fitted at all costs." Rather, as Otto Pächt rightly remarks, his "views were evolved in a constant struggle to interpret and explain to himself and others the experiences gained in closest possible communication with the object."[66]

As ancient artists and natural scientists sought to render chaotic nature into harmonious and knowable form, so they participated in the idea and formation of culture. Hannah Arendt notes that "'culture,' word and concept, is itself Roman in origin." The word "culture," she continues, "derives from *colere*—to cultivate, to dwell, to take care of, to tend and preserve—and it relates primarily to the intercourse of man with nature in the sense of cultivating and tending nature until it becomes fit for human habitation."[67] Riegl would have been exposed to the implications of this understanding of culture through the ideas of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, whose texts were read and discussed in the German Students' Reading Society during the years in which he was a member. From these philosophers he would have learned that culture is best carried out in community with others and that it has metaphysical and actual meanings.[68] In concert with the aims of the Reading Society, Riegl's writings

stress ideas of community, an ethics of attentiveness, and the harmonious interaction between humankind and nature.

Focusing his attention on "a specific and consciously purposeful artistic will [*Kunstwollen*]," Riegl therefore understood the artwork to be more than the mechanistic product of "function, raw material, and technique."[69] Indeed, at the same time as he sought to account for the forming impulse and its specific manifestations, he sought to wrest ideas of art and artistic imagination away from the ever-encroaching tentacles of historicism and technology. Conceiving the *Kunstwollen* in a continuous trajectory, Riegl, moreover, endeavored to secure a history for art that would connect aesthetic objects to the broader contexts under which they were produced. In this way, the concept of the *Kunstwollen* could conceivably overcome the division between the study of aesthetic objects and their histories, a division which, as Anthony Vidler suggests, had preoccupied idealist and materialist art history since the Enlightenment.[70]

It is interesting to note that just as assuredly as Riegl acknowledges the subjective aspect of the *Kunstwollen* (the fact that it becomes manifest in the mind of the beholder), he conceives of it as a "scientific," or systematic, concept. The tension in the *Kunstwollen*—as subjective and objective—bares the strain of the author's historical moment.[71] Like many of his colleagues in turn-of-the-century Vienna, Riegl was exposed to the scientific theories of Ernst Mach and the neo-Kantian philosophy of Konrad Fiedler. While Mach advocated a strong version of the empiricism of the senses, Fiedler, in keeping with Kant's turn toward the subject, emphasized the study of *Anschauung*, the visual idea or form of the perceptible object in the mind of the beholder. Attending to the perceptual experience of the beholder inevitably led to the desire to establish an "objective" measure of perception, a means by which to codify the beholder's experience of the aesthetic object. Defined as a systematic concept discernible through the perception of the senses, Riegl's *Kunstwollen* bears the influence of Mach and Fiedler; at the same time, the "scientific" nature of his conception must be understood as part of a broader effort to make art history a sufficiently systematic, autonomous discipline.[72]

Seeking a method and a suite of terms that would enable him to connect an "objective" measure of perception with a speculative, systematic philosophy of history, Riegl aimed to provide art history with a more "scientific" foundation, yet one that would accommodate change over time as well as change in time.[73] In this way, Riegl, like others of his generation, endeavored to move beyond the idealist aesthetics of a universal cultural history. Be that as it may, it is important to point out how Riegl acknowledges the relative nature of artistic value only to then burden the *Kunstwollen* with a developmental history similar to those which under-

gird the universal cultural histories of the nineteenth century. As a result, his scholarship is marked by a sweeping historical—and sometimes evolutionary—narrative. Yet he also attends to the individual work for its own sake, respecting the individual particularities of the object and their perception by the beholder.[74]

Rather than discredit Riegl for the persistent tension within the *Kunstwollen*—a concept at once subjective and objective, relative and historical—we would do well to remember that the antinomies in his concept and in his system are those which structure Kant's own philosophical enterprise. Instead of faulting Riegl for a situation he might not have been able to overcome, perhaps more to the point would be to ask ourselves whether the creation of a "scientific" system composed of unique aesthetic objects could ever succeed in suturing the antinomies we find in Kant's philosophy and in Riegl's art history—and whether the kind of totalizing system such an operation would engender would be a worthy goal in the first place. Riegl and Benjamin clearly understood the rub: In order for facts or objects to be meaningful, we have to be able relate them to concepts; conceptual thinking, however, constrains what we might "know" about an aesthetic object. Widening the conceptual compass of the object and its perception, Riegl and Benjamin aimed to bring to light aspects of aesthetic objects and aesthetic experience suppressed or neglected in previous art-historical accounts. At the same time, they sought to bring object, meaning, and context together in new and provocative ways.

Attending to the *Kunstwollen*, Riegl situates the object as the product of a particular time and place at the same time as he attempts to decipher the formal meaning of the work of art. Here, emphasis is placed on the visibility of meaning and on the drawing out of inconspicuous aspects of the aesthetic object in the search for meaning. Beginning with the work of art and moving out along a line of speculation, Riegl's *Kunstwollen* thus permits of a kind of "scientific" theory of the object, a theory defined—as Ernst Cassirer so carefully demonstrated—through the use of hypothesis. In the manner of a Kantian regulative idea, Riegl's concept of the *Kunstwollen* enables the drawing-out of meaning and the conjecturing of systems for works where none had existed previously, or where, as in the case of the late Roman art industry, preexisting aesthetic categories had occluded the meaning and importance of aesthetic objects. Referring simultaneously to form and meaning, as well as to the object and to the larger culture in which it was produced, the concept of the *Kunstwollen* allows Riegl to integrate object and theory, and in so doing to move between empirical, objective, and transcendental points of view.

Although Riegl cast the *Kunstwollen* in a continuous trajectory, it is

important to underscore that he did not view this concept in a normative sense. Instead, in keeping with his understanding of the historicity of perception and aesthetic judgment, he defines the *Kunstwollen* as an intrinsic value, yet one that changes over time. In *Late Roman Art Industry* he makes this explicit, as he charts the transition from a haptic to an optic mode of perception.[75] Whereas haptic perception seeks "the objective close-up grasp of elements in their tangible flatness and their mechanical conjunction," optic perception strives for "a subjective optical grasp of the whole as viewed from a distance, first as an image from memory."[76] In *Late Roman Art Industry* the author amplifies on this shift from haptic to optic through a discussion of near, normal, and distant viewing, relating these modes of perception to antique architecture, sculpture, painting, and the arts and crafts.

As Kant had done in his analytic of the sublime, Riegl takes two architectural monuments as his points of departure. If for Kant the pyramids require a point of view neither too near nor too far from them "in order to get the full emotional effect from their size," for Riegl the undifferentiated planar surfaces of the pyramids appeal to the viewer's sense of touch, and so are best apprehended from close range (*Nahsicht*). Conversely, because the columned portico of the Greek temple perforates the façade into a series of forms, the viewer must stand back at a moderate distance in order to apprehend the temple in a unified view. This calls upon what Riegl terms normal vision (*Normalsicht*). Arriving at a decisive moment in his argument, Riegl then suggests that the perception of the Pantheon in Rome—a "restless curve searching for depth"—requires a vantage point he designates by the term distant view (*Fernsicht*) (fig. 33).

In the Pantheon's interior, Riegl explains, "no two points of a single zone lie on the same [optical] plane"; to make matters worse, the entire interior space of the monument can only be "perceived, in part, incompletely (on the sides) and in part not at all (on the back)." The complex interplay of columns, niches, and reticulated surfaces along the length and height of the interior adds to this "constant variation in [perceptible] depth," drawing "the gaze of the beholder unresistingly towards the depth" as she attempts to apprehend the monument as a whole.[77] As in Kant's analytic of the sublime, the spectator in the Pantheon must seek refuge within the mental faculties in order to make a unified object out of the discrete views and oscillating depth the Pantheon presents to optical perception.

Calling on what Riegl describes variously as "the expanding assistance of subjective consciousness" (*die ergänzende Hilfsleistung des subjektiven Bewusstseins*) or "the expanding experience" (*ergänzende Erfarhrung*), I want to argue that distant viewing marks the transition from an objec-

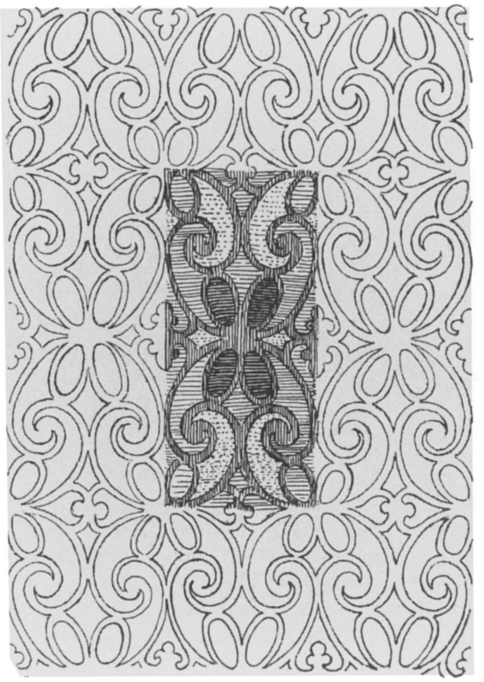
33. Interior of the Pantheon, Rome. Vanni/Art Resource, NY.

34. Engraving of an enameled bronze plaque from Themse. British Museum. In Riegel, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie* (Vienna: K. K. Hof-und Staatsdruckerei, 1901–23).

tive to a transcendental point of view.[78] An enameled bronze plaque found in Themse, illustrated in Riegl's text, offers an additional case in point (figs. 34 and 35). "And what an ornament!," Riegl exclaims,

> We ask: What is pattern and what is ground? We believe we recognize shields, volutes, but then the changing enamel coloring disorients us again. We see light-colored and dark-colored volutes thrust into one another, but no ground between them. Yet let's linger first on the midpoint: the four-leaved rosette in the middle. The whole pattern seemingly converges in it. But what about the oval leaves that stare inward from the corners? In them lies the key to understanding the entire pattern—each one is nothing other than a quarter of the center rosette. If we extend [*ergänzen*] each of these corner leaves into a complete rosette and if we imagine, moreover, a continuation based on the middle rosette, we would recognize that the same pattern repeats itself on all four sides of the oblong.[79]

Staying the oscillating figure-ground relation on the bronze plaque requires the beholder to make the transition from seeing to representing the object in the mind's eye. Apprehending a sense of order in the decoration of the plaque then requires a further mental extension, as the viewer must "imagine" the continuation of the rosette beyond the borders of the



35. Engraving of a detail of a plaque (fig. 34). In Riegel, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie.*

object in front of her. The transcendental point of view made possible through this further mental extension, this "expanding assistance of subjective consciousness," is, to my mind, what Riegl intends by the term "distant viewing."

As Barbara Harlow suggests, the "undecidable interplay" between foreground and background, or pattern (*Muster*) and ground (*Grund*) on the enameled bronze plaque "is transfixing to its beholder."[80] As in the *Kunstwollen,* which includes within its conceptual compass the *Kunstwollen* of the single object as well as the idea of an artistic will progressing in history, here empirical, objective, and transcendental points of view are mutually defining and never entirely told apart. While one could rightly argue that this oscillation points to the hermeneutic circle of Riegl's *Kunstwollen,* one must also attend to how his conception takes the interpretative ground out from under the hermeneut's feet: the beholder, after all, must resort to an "expanding experience" in order to make sense of the shifting interplay of surface and depth, figure, and ground.

Seeking to transform pattern into ground as ground turns into pattern, or depth into surface as surface recedes into depth, the viewing of

the enameled bronze plaque, like the spectator in the Pantheon, confronts the activation of the background that, for Riegl, characterizes the late Roman *Kunstwollen.* Where Riegl's contemporaries saw in the background of the arts and crafts of the late Roman period an empty spatial depth, a sign for them of the decay of classical beauty, Riegl understood "the emergence of the background into unmistakable prominence" as a decisive feature—the key element, in fact, for understanding the artistic will of the late Roman period. Riegl's attention to and activation of the background is an example of what Benjamin praised in his art history, namely, the way he raised neglected or inconspicuous material content to the level of signification or meaning.[81]

## Historical Value and Age Value

Riegl's penchant for finding value in the neglected, his understanding of the relativity of artistic value and shifts in point of view, is evident throughout his 1903 essay, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin." And just as he strained to employ the *Kunstwollen* as a scientific concept, so in this essay he lays emphasis on the systematicity of historical value at the same time as he offers age value as its potential undoing.[82] Riegl's essay served as the preface to his proposal for legislation on monument preservation in the lands of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[83] Published several years after Joseph Olbrich's Secession Building at Vienna announced itself with the mottoes "To every age its art" and "To art its freedom," the tenor of Riegl's essay, with its emphasis on relative value, was in tune with the modern *Kunstwollen* (fig. 36).

Riegl begins "The Modern Cult of Monuments" with a definition of that well-known category, the intentional monument. In a rather showstopping swerve, however, he immediately derails the reader. The "modern cult and preservation of monuments," he writes, does not concern so-called intentional monuments but "*Kunst- und historische Denkmale,* monuments of art and history as they are officially designated in Austria."[84] Not surprisingly, the appearance of a modern art value in the twentieth century ushered in a new relation to cultural artifacts. Where preservation decisions had previously been made according to an "inviolable artistic canon," a standard of value that remained undisputed from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century, at the time Riegl penned his introduction preservation decisions were not so easily settled. Inasmuch as he aimed to facilitate contemporary preservation decisions, Riegl also sought to define this modern art value for his contemporary audience. In "The Modern Cult of Monuments" he therefore focused on unintentional

36. Joseph Maria Olbrich, Secession Building, Vienna, 1897–98. Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY.

monuments, for it was the question of whether to preserve these artifacts—and in what manner—that continued to vex and divide preservationists in turn-of-the-century Austria. Unlike the intentional monument, which is "erected for the specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events (or a combination thereof) alive in the minds of future generations," it is "*we*," Riegl emphasizes, who "have defined the value of the unintentional ones."[85]

Turning from the received idea of the monument as an intentional production to unintentional monuments of art and history enables Riegl to place the monument in a field of relative values: intentional and unintentional commemorative value, art and historical value, newness and age value. Contrary to the rather limited class of intentional monuments, "which recall a specific moment or complex of moments from the past," age value, which is an unintentional commemorative value, "embraces every artifact without regard to its original significance and purpose, as long as it reveals the passage of a considerable period of time."[86] It fol-

lows that the passage from intentional commemorative value to the celebration of age value for its own sake is a movement from the specific to the general in which the "scope of . . . memory-value widens." I will argue that in the progression from intentional commemorative value to age value, time joins history—in the service of chronology—only to wrest itself gradually free of history in order to become available as its own subjective effect. Laying claim from the outset, then, to the changing nature of value over time, as well as to the cluster of values that might be present in any given perception of a monument, Riegl underscores the historicity of the beholder and the "beholder's involvement" in perception.[87]

Riegl describes the movement from intentional to unintentional commemorative value as chronological and progressive. "In essence, all of antiquity and the Middle Ages knew only intentional monuments," he argues.[88] During this period before a modern idea of history, the intentional monument was regarded as an object rather than a historical marker. Laying claim to immortality by preserving a moment in time, these monuments did not mark the passage of time between past and present so much as suspend within them a kind of eternal present. Moreover, since these intentional monuments did not rest on an idea of historical development, they did not elicit concerted efforts toward preservation. For Riegl, the emergence of a sense of historical value ushers in the preservation of monuments.

As a sense of historical value arose during the fifteenth century in Italy, unintentional monuments—predominantly those of antiquity—began to be recorded and preserved. With the advent of historical value, time and space came together in a modern idea of history. Unmoored from the undifferentiated temporal realm of an eternal present, the monument with historical value is now located at a point in chronological time. The unintentional monument with historical value is thus no longer an object that simply warns or reminds; instead, it is perceived as an irreplaceable and irremovable link in a chain of development.[89] Historical development, in turn, is conceived of as a conceptual space that extends from the present toward the most distant reaches of the past. If historical time is now understood as an arrow pointing back toward the past, then historical value brings with it an interest in the "original status" of the object "as an artifact"—as a kind of witness of and from the past that enables the beholder to "see earlier stages" of the present. Since, according to Riegl, "everything that has been and is no longer we call *historical,* in accordance with the modern notion that what has been can never be again," it is the "task of the historian to make up for the damage nature has wrought in monuments over time."

While Riegl claims that historical value first arose in Italy during the fifteenth century, a sense of historical value might be said to extend back to Petrarch (1304–74), who "discovered history" in his promenades "through the wilderness of ruins then covering most of Rome."[90] At the time Petrarch rambled through Rome, these ruins were considered "marvels" (*mirabilia*). The term *miribilia*, with its connotations of the divine and the miraculous, effectively lodged the Roman ruins in an eternal present. As Thomas Greene has argued, Petrarch was the first to notice that "classical antiquity was very different than his own medieval world, and the first to consider antiquity more admirable."[91] This shift in perspective required Petrarch to recognize the distance separating his world from the past, and it was precisely this separation that enabled him to discover a sense of history. Once the distance necessary for history had been established, then a bridging of time between past and present could occur via an intellectual process of reflection.

The distance between past and present that a sense of historical value requires is similar to the relation between beholder and nature in Kant's 1790 analytic of the sublime. Kant's sublime, which commences with an occasion of nature's might or vastness, ends when the subject discovers a law of reason with which to apprehend nature. History, offering a distance between past and present as well as a suite of explanations for cause and effect, allows the historian to explain the past from a comfortably removed objective or transcendental viewpoint. Marking out time, fixing time as chronology, history creates the past as an intellectual space to be inhabited by a beholder or a reader who, while perhaps not wholly disinterested, is nevertheless presupposed to have made of the past an object of and for reflection. In this sense, too, history aligns itself with historical value: just as history turns the past into an object of and for reflection, so historical value seeks to preserve the integrity of the object from the past.[92]

Introduced during the Renaissance, historical value achieved prominence only in the nineteenth century, when cultural history (*Kulturgeschichte*) established itself as a mode of addressing the past. The study of particulars and minutiae characterizing cultural history then "transformed itself slowly into developmental value, for which particulars were ultimately unimportant."[93] This regard for development per se is what Riegl intends by his neologism, age value. Recall that historical value arises when time and space join in the modern idea of history as a developmental chain, wherein every age, like every artifact, succeeds its predecessor. Attending to the past as history, historical value seeks to preserve the past for the present, to mark and arrest time, so that the past will

stand before the beholder's gaze "as it really was." Age value, on the other hand, comes to the fore when time separates itself from history.

In Riegl's conception of age value, natural processes of decay erode the monuments of humankind.[94] Age value, which incorporates time into the aesthetic experience, evokes an emotional response to the life-cycle of nature, to the inevitable flow of temporal and historical processes. Age value warns us of what Georg Simmel, writing on the ruin, describes as the "cosmic tragedy" that is our fate mirrored in traces of decay.[95] As Riegl and Simmel suggest, it is the association of ideas set up by the decaying monument—rather than the object per se—which constitutes the experience of age value. If historical value attends to the monument as a historical marker or witness, in the perception of age value, Riegl remarks evocatively, "the object has shrunk to a necessary evil."

Listen to Riegl as he moves, in the following definition of age value, from the monument to its perceptual and emotional effects:

> These monuments are nothing more than indispensable catalysts which trigger in the beholder a sense of the life cycle, of the emergence of the particular from the general and its gradual but inevitable dissolution back into the general. This immediate emotional effect depends on neither scholarly knowledge nor historical education for its satisfaction, since it is evoked by mere sensory perception. Hence it is not restricted to the educated . . . but also touches the masses independent of their education. The general validity, which it shares with religious feelings, gives this new commemorative (monument) value a significance whose ultimate consequences cannot yet be assessed. We will henceforth call this the *age-value.*[96]

When Riegl refers to "the emergence of the particular from the general and its gradual but inevitable dissolution back into the general," he is signaling both the condition of alienation of humankind (the particular) from nature (the general) and the imaginative reconciliation of humankind and nature in the suspended space of the aesthetic experience of age value. Sharing a "general validity with religious feelings," the experience of age value is by definition emotional in tenor. In this sense, age value opposes the intellectual and temporal distance from the past required for historical reflection and a sense of historical value. As Riegl makes clear, age value is an outgrowth of historical value. Documenting the rise to dominance of historical value from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, Riegl follows the arc of a modern idea of history. Turning to the present, the author heralds age value as the primary commemorative value of the twentieth century.

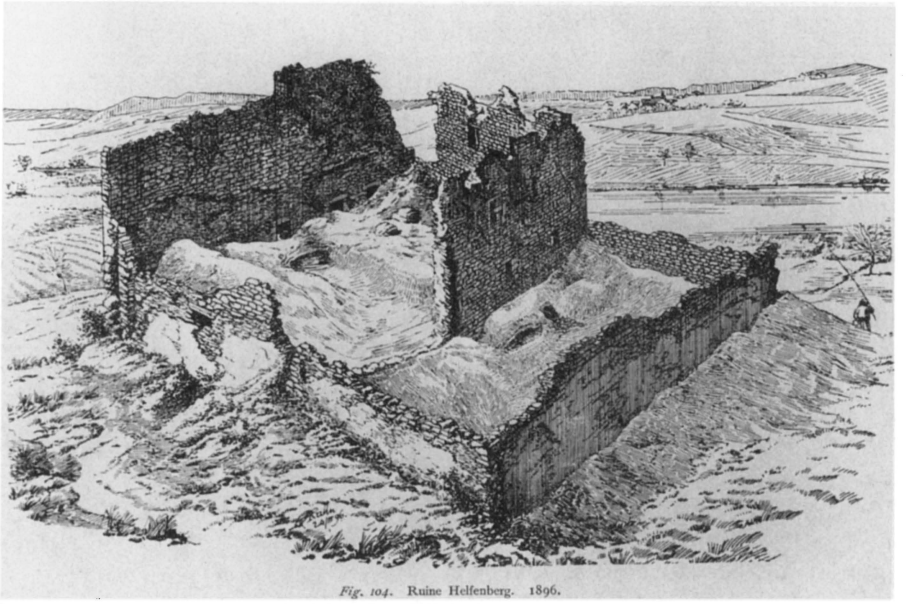
Understanding the finitude of the beholder, which is to say the spa-

tiotemporal condition of a subject in history, Riegl's monument values are initiated in the interaction between beholder and monument. In a manner similar to the Kantian sublime, Riegl's theory regards the monument as an occasion for the engendering of a sense of historical value, age value, and the like in the mind of the subject. Since the "slow and inevitable disintegration of nature" has more resonance for an evocation of age value than the appearance of violent, swift destruction, Riegl contends that age value "manifests itself less violently, though more tellingly, in the corrosion of surfaces, in their patina, in the wear and tear of buildings and objects, and so forth."[97] Lending natural and human force equal value, Riegl does not consider the modern cult of age value as laden with pathos, and he contrasts the modern notion of age value with the Baroque cult of ruins for precisely this reason.[98]

Consider the following example. Both historical value and age value are present in Johann Rudolf Rahn's 1896 drawing of the *Ruins of the Helfenberg* and in a photograph of the Ehrenburg, a medieval castle at Brodenbach on the Mosel (figs. 37 and 38). In Rahn's rendering of the Helfenberg, historical value takes precedence, since this drawing was intended as a recording for purposes of historical and architectural research. The photograph of the Ehrenburg, on the other hand, offers an example of the compelling perceptual pull of age value. Although the viewer in this case may be concerned with the castle's historical facts and details, the intensive and extensive signs of natural erosion will most likely be accorded perceptual priority over the specifics of monument and site.

Riegl defines age value as an outgrowth of historical value. Notwithstanding this definition, I want to consider the way age value works within history while also exceeding it. Like the patina on a prized bronze, the traces of age on a monument are at once signs of history and of nature. The traces of age on a monument put us immediately into history while also signaling what is outside of it: if nature, as sign, has temporal boundaries, then I would argue that nature, as concept, extends beyond chronological or historical time as an abyss that exceeds every attempt at conceptual definition or chronological demarcation.[99] In this sense, the concept of nature shares affinities with the concept of eternity. Highlighting the manner in which the acceleration and segmentation of time are sublated in the concept of eternity, Benjamin, following the poet Joubert, calls eternity "completing time."[100] For Benjamin, interiorizing remembrance, prehistory, and tradition occur within completing time.

Since the traces of age on a monument signal the concept of nature, these traces cannot be bound by the frame of history or by the form of the historical monument. Like Hegel's understanding of interiorizing re-




37. Ruin at Helfenberg, 1896, engraving. From Johann Rudolf Rahn, *Die mittelalterlichen Architektur- und Kunstdenkmäler des Cantons Thurgau* (Frauenfeld: J. Huber, 1899).

membrance (*Erinnerung*), the perception of age value works against the perception of historical value by inverting its priority. The ostensible value of the monument—whether the intentional commemoration of a historical person or event, or the marking of an unintentional monument as a historical artifact—thus recedes in perceptual interest as the signs of age, which lie on the frame of the monument, become the central focus of perception. Age value, I would argue, stands in carnivalesque relation to historical value. Reveling in the injurious effects of time's passage, age value unmasks history before the throne of natural time.

The perceptual interplay of historical value and age value is reminiscent of Riegl's description of the viewer's experience of the enameled bronze plaque found in Themse. Echoing Riegl, we might ask in regard to historical value and age value: what is pattern and what is ground? While the instability of values—borne, in part, from the demise of an eternal art value—led Riegl to write an introduction that would facilitate the preservation of monuments of art and history, it would appear that in "The Modern Cult of Monuments" historical value and age value become

38. Ruin at Ehrenberg bei Brodenbach an der Mosel. Reproduced from Richard Schmidt, *Burgen des Deutschen Mittelalters* (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 1959). Courtesy of Hirmer Verlag GmbH.

the perceptual placeholders for what the author had earlier termed normal and distant viewing. Calling on the sense of sight, historical value, like normal vision (*Nahsicht*), requires the beholder to stand back from the monument in order to apprehend it in a unified view. Concentrating on the "objective individuality" of the monument, which is to say on the monument as a unified object of perception, historical value "recognizes individual events in an objective manner."

The objective viewpoint required for historical value attaches the monument to a broader inquiry, namely, to the modern idea of history, an idea that rests on a chronological sense of time. If age value inverts the priority of historical value, then what becomes of the modern idea of history when age value takes precedence in perception? Moving from the specific historical object to a generalized conception of the passage of time, age value substitutes for the "objective individuality" of the monument "a merely subjective effect." Calling on what the author had earlier described as the "expanding assistance of subjective consciousness" or the "expanding experience," age value, I suggest, requires distant viewing (*Ferhnsicht*) in order to produce this "subjective effect."[101] Distant viewing, in turn, necessitates a transcendental viewpoint.

Disregarding the "objective individuality" of the historical monument in favor of a "merely subjective effect," age value turns on an association of ideas about the passage of time. In this way, age value evokes what Riegl calls "a sense of the life cycle" of nature. In the perception of age value, time and space float out toward the infinite reaches of natural time, a concept of time that effectively exceeds the definitive gestures of chronology, as the age of the past continuously exceeds, or recedes behind, an origin, a genesis, or even a big bang. Age value, I have argued, works with history while also exceeding it: If time and space come together in the modern idea of history, time and space are uncoupled in the experience of age value. Contrary to the transcendental viewpoint of the Kantian sublime, the transcendental vantage of age value does not enable the beholder to unify perceptual experience under a law of reason. Age value disrupts, we might say, but offers no repair. In this way, the perceptual experience of age value signals the cleavage in modernity that figures Benjamin's subsequent essay, "Experience and Poverty."

Like Riegl's description of the perceptual oscillation of historical and age value, nature and history trade places in "The Modern Cult of Monuments." "Appreciating the past for itself" rather than any particular moment in time, age value "desires the monument to be left entirely to the forces of nature acting upon it." As age value destroys the monuments of art and history, as it "contributes to its own demise," it disrupts a modern idea of history.[102] In this sense, the triumph of age value corresponds

to that demise of eternal art value Riegl championed in *Late Roman Art Industry.* And yet, for as much as Riegl's essay persuasively opens out aesthetic experience to include the "subjective effect" of age value, it remains crimped by a modern idea of history. Underscoring, at the close of his essay, the way historical value defines the artifact as "an irreplaceable and irremovable link in a chain of development," Riegl notes that the pleasure derived from a historical monument "does not spring simply from its age value; it also depends a good deal upon the satisfaction derived from the classification of a monument according to a certain style, be it antique, Gothic, or Baroque."[103] With these words, Riegl rehearses the age-old quarrel between nature and culture, demonstrating, as he does so, how history accedes to dominance over nature.

Be that as it may, Riegl's writings demonstrate the fallacy of a purely objective point of view, that vantage point of the modern idea of history. Just as his 1903 essay presents the viewing of a historical monument as a subjective experience, his concept of the *Kunstwollen* points out that history is never value free: How we see the past is colored by our own historical position and changing perceptions. Like the *Kunstwollen,* the concept of age value reveals why the historical artifact and the modern idea of history can never be overlaid to form one great, wieldy chain—age value works against the beholder's desire for "a cool and sharp grasp of perceptible and tangible reality."[104] If in the modern idea of history the gap between past and present is sutured through an intellectual process of reflection, if historical value seeks to preserve the monument as it was at the moment of its creation, age value defies the desire to render the monument into an object of and for reflection. Age value destroys the memorial as it brings forth the immemorial. In the subjective experience of age value, the historical monument triggers in the beholder "a sense of the life cycle," a sense of nature and natural time that exceeds the modern idea of history, official or voluntary memory, and lived experience.

## Benjamin's Aura

For Benjamin, "the word 'history' stands written on the countenance of nature in the characters of transience."[105] Benjamin's conceptions of the aura, allegory, and the dialectical image presuppose the destruction of the modern idea of history and historical value evoked in this sentence of 1928. As in the experience of age value, here, as nature holds sway, so-called history loses its integrity and its capacity for permanent inscription. Insofar as the "The Modern Cult of Monuments" might serve as a precursor to Benjamin's own attempts to undo history from within, so, I

have argued, does Riegl's essay demonstrate the insistence of the modern idea of history. If Riegl led the way, then it would be for Benjamin to blast apart the links in the chain of history.

Whereas the modern idea of history rests on the protocols of objectivity, and so on the supposed separation of subject and object, in the aesthetic experience of the aura subject and object are interwoven. In this way the aura offers what Benjamin, in 1918, describes as a higher form of experience—an experience of a "sphere of total neutrality in regard to the concepts of both subject and object."[106] Such higher experience counters "the triumph of subjectivity and . . . an arbitrary rule over things,"[107] as it opens up the philosophical definition of experience to "pure knowledge," a form of knowledge that occurs in the interval—the flash—that precedes the division of subject and object. Occurring in the perceptual moment of a particular here and now, the aura in Benjamin's definition is an authentic experience, an occasion for interiorizing remembrance rather than mental representation. In its resistance to ready representation or inscription, the aura defies what Benjamin terms a Kantian "certainty of knowledge that is lasting."[108]

For Benjamin, it will be remembered, prehistory and tradition are conceived as a temporal and spatial continuum—a continuum of voluntary and involuntary memory, of authentic and lived experience. In his 1931 essay, "Little History of Photography," the author maintains that "the absolute continuum from brightest light to darkest shadow" accounts for the appearance of the aura in early photographs (fig. 39).[109] In a similar manner, his description of the aura of a natural scene extends from the bright sun of "a summer's noon" to perceptible shadow. "What is aura, actually? A strange weave of space and time: the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close it may be. While at rest on a summer's noon, to trace a range of mountains on the horizon, or a branch that throws its shadow on the observer, until the moment or the hour become part of their appearance—this is what it means to breathe the aura of those mountains, that branch."

Suffusing the scene in an atmosphere of light and dark, sun and shadow render this appearance of nature distinct from any other. When tracing the contour of a distant mountain range, or a branch that "throws its shadow on the observer," Benjamin situates the beholder within a specific spatiotemporal moment of aesthetic contemplation. Breathing in "the aura of those mountains, that branch," the observer is drawn into a weave of space and time, of light and dark, which evokes the idea of nature as a continuum. At the same time, Benjamin defines the aura through its distance from the perceiving subject. Writing at a time when processes of mechanical reproducibility threatened to divest the singular of its

39. David Octavius Hill, "Mrs. Elizabeth (Johnstone) Hall," ca. 1846, photograph. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. (c) The J. Paul Getty Museum.

uniqueness, the author celebrates the aura as an occasion of resistance to the passionate inclination to bring things *closer.*[110]

Here, the subject does not dominate nature, nor does nature dominate the subject. Rather, the observer is under the sway of nature in the perceptual experience of the aura.[111] In this sense, the aura of a natural scene resembles Benjamin's remarks about the child's perception of color. Since, for Benjamin, the sight of the child is isolated from the concern with form and three-dimensionality, "the child's view of color . . . is sight at is purest." In a fragment from 1914–15, he continues:

> The rainbow is a pure childlike image. In it color is wholly contoural. . . . Where color provides the contours, objects are not reduced to things but are constituted by an order consisting of an infinite range of nuances. . . . The [child's] order of art is paradisiacal because there is no thought of the dissolution of boundaries—from excitement—in the object of experience. Instead the world is full of color in a state of identity, innocence, and harmony. Children are not ashamed since they do not reflect but only see.

In contrast to "productive adults," for whom "color can subsist only within law-given circumstances," the child begins with color. For the child, the color of the rainbow "marks boundaries" that are "contoural": instead of serving to distinguish figure from ground, or foreground from background, these boundaries exist on a surface. From the child's point of view, the rainbow is therefore not a discrete form or object of experience but an "interrelated totality of the world of the imagination."[112] To isolate "sight at its purest" is to see rather than to reflect—to experience a continuum that precedes both the spatial division of this and that and the temporal division of first this and then that.

According to Benjamin, this is what Baudelaire's correspondences offer the modern reader. As for the child, so for the poet of "La Vie antérieure":

> The breakers, tumbling the images of the heavens,
> Blended, in a solemn and mystical way,
> The all-powerful chords of their rich music
> With the colors of the sunset reflected in my eyes.
>
> This is where I lived.[113]

Like the child's "order of art," Baudelaire's correspondences transcend the forms of earthly existence through a point of view that sees more deeply into forms. This vantage point permits the child and the poet to draw closer to color, or the "echoes that blend from afar." Yet if the child

and the author of "Correspondances" transcend what Benjamin describes as "the limits of earthly existence," they are not transcendental to this existence and its forms. Opposing the poetic reverie inspired by the interconnected correspondences, Baudelaire indicates that it is the melancholy poet who contemplates the earth as an object of reflection separate from him:

> I contemplate, from on high, the globe in its roundness,
> And no longer look there for the shelter of a hut.[114]

In his 1939 essay, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," Benjamin comments on how the aura attracts the attention of the observer. "Inherent in the gaze," he writes, "is the expectation that it will be returned by that on which it is bestowed."

> Where this expectation is met (which, in the case of thought processes, can apply equally to an intentional gaze of awareness and to a glance pure and simple), there is an experience [*Erfahrung*] of the aura in its fullness. "Perceptibility," as Novalis puts it, "is an attentiveness." The perceptibility he has in mind is none other than that of the aura. Experience of the aura thus arises from the fact that a response characteristic of human relationships is transposed to the relationship between humans and inanimate objects. The person we look at, or who feels he is being looked at, looks at us in return. To experience the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look back at us.[115]

Reminiscent of his earlier description of a mountain range on a summer's noon, here the author describes the experience of the aura as a moment of interrelation between observer and observed. As he implies, the perceptibility that invests the object with the ability to look back is not marshaled toward the ends of the subject.[116] On the contrary, this special kind of "attentiveness" is intentionless—it is not engaged in transforming what is looked at into an object of knowledge; instead, it allows the object to come into its fullness as an end in itself.

According to Benjamin, endowing the object with "the ability to look back at us in return" is an authentic experience. He adds, in turn, that the object's capacity to return our gaze "corresponds to the data of the *mémoire involontaire.*" Earlier he had defined the aura as "the unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be"; here he "lends support" to this conception insofar as the data of interiorizing remembrance are also unique: "They are lost to the memory that seeks to retain them."[117] Like the data of involuntary memory, those figureless images that nestle in the folds of the fan of conscious memory, the associations that seek to

"cluster around an object of perception" are "the aura of that object."[118] The aura is, then, neither the object in the world nor the object in the mind, but those associations—themselves deposited through long experience—which draw the object, and the beholder, toward the past. Benjamin uses the word "ornament" to characterize the thicket of associations, the figureless images of interiorizing remembrance, which are evoked in the experience of the aura.[119]

Commenting on a photograph from around 1850, the author notes how "during the considerable period of the exposure, the subject (as it were) grew into the picture" (fig. 40). "Just consider Schelling's coat," he continues. "It will surely pass into immortality along with him: the shape it has borrowed from its wearer is not unworthy of the creases in his face."[120] Just as the traces of long use alter the philosopher's coat, so does Schelling's own space and time sear into the very weave of the photograph. Reminiscent of Riegl's conception of age value, Schelling's coat not only connotes a sense of time past, of a particular here and now, but also signals duration and the unapproachable, the extent and difference in time between his day and our own.[121] Schelling's coat, moreover, offers what the author calls "that tiny spark of contingency," that "inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long-forgotten moment the future nests so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover it."[122] Here, as else, Benjamin indicates how the aura, poised at an interval between past and future, draws the beholder into a moment redolent of a temporal continuum of past, present, and future.

Seeing the "inconspicuous spot" in the photograph, breathing in the aura, signals a proximity to the image—a close viewing that finds its analogue in Benjamin's own celebrated micrological gaze. Riegl, too, advocates for a close study of the incidental features of aesthetic objects. Be that as it may, Benjamin's conception of the aura as "the semblance of a distance" exists in marked contrast to the proceedings of Riegl's term "distant viewing" (*Fernsicht*). Recall how Riegl, discussing the enameled bronze plaque found at Themse (fig. 34), brought distant viewing to bear upon the perception of the object. Ushering in a transcendental vantage, distant viewing enables the observer to "imagine" the interlacing patterns on the surface of the object beyond the outlines of the actual object in front of her. In this way, a perceptual experience of initial disorder is transformed into an image of perceptible order. In the experience of the aura, as in the child's view of color, proximity to the object does not yield definite form: here, the observer is brought close to an image that eludes any attempt to turn contour, or figureless image, into discrete form. Whereas for Riegl, we might say, ornament is an aesthetic and intellectual conundrum waiting to be solved, for Benjamin the terms ornament

40. "The Philosopher Schelling," ca. 1850. Photographer (German) unknown.

and aura disclose a spatial and temporal abyss that eludes the physical, mental, or mechanical grasp.

When the beholder invests the object with the ability to look back, the aura of the object, Benjamin writes, becomes "the breath of prehistory."[123] Breathing in the aura, the beholder is suffused with the far in the near—with the idea of nature as a continuum or with interiorizing remembrance—as the associations that cluster around the object momentarily settle into "an apparition of [spatial and temporal] distance." Despite its charge, it is important to underscore that the memory of this onetime oneness is not only momentary but imaginary: here, we might say, *fons et origo* have been uncoupled such that source and origin become two distinct—but related—terms. In regard to the aura, the source that evokes interiorizing remembrance is the object of perception. The origin of these figureless images, these associations, however, lies neither in the object of perception nor in the object of representation (the perceptual object taken up in the mind of the beholder). Rather, as the involuntary aspect of interiorizing remembrance suggests, this memory is marginal to the observer.

The beholder in Benjamin's account of the aura is therefore not the Kantian originator or creator of mental representation. Instead of re-presenting an object derived from the cogito, the observer breathes in the

aura. If the beholder is an actor in this experience, then the aura functions in a manner akin to *le souffleur* (the prompter): the aura prompts the beholder with the "breath of prehistory," thereby enabling her to recollect what had been forgotten. Although the origin of interiorizing remembrance has no representational origin, and the memory of a continuum of memory exists without standing out in relief, the aura nevertheless corresponds to interiorizing remembrance in such a way that the beholder is affected in this authentic experience. Located in the interval between seeing and representation, the aura underscores the asymptotic relation between prehistory and the present, involuntary and voluntary memory, object and representation.[124] As Benjamin wrote of Baudelaire's expression of love in "À une passante," in the experience of the aura an "eternal farewell" coincides "with the moment of enchantment."[125]

Benjamin sets great store by the instant in which subject and object are momentarily suspended in the aesthetic experience of the aura. Recall that in his 1918 essay "On the Program of the Coming Philosophy" he makes clear that "pure knowledge" or "truth" resides in a "sphere of total neutrality in regard to the concepts of both subject and object." Contrasting, in 1928, the object of knowledge to an intentionless state of philosophical contemplation, he remarks: "Truth never enters into a relation, and especially not into an intentional one. The object of knowledge, which is determined by the intention of the concept, is not truth. Truth is an intentionless existence made up of ideas. The proper attitude toward truth is, accordingly, not a belief in knowing but an immersion and disappearance into it. Truth is the death of intention."[126]

To my mind, the experience of the aura turns on this intentionless state of philosophical contemplation. Breathing in the "aura of those mountains, of that branch," Benjamin stresses how the beholder incorporates the aura rather than reflects upon the scene. As an occasion for interiorizing remembrance rather than conceptual thought or intellectual reflection, the aura evokes the idea of nature and memory as a continuum. Idea rather than concept, ornament rather than object, the aura—that "strange weave of space and time"—presents nature in its veil.[127] Like the child's view of color or the contourless figures of interiorizing remembrance, which are altered in the move toward representation and voluntary memory, the perception of the aura can never stand out in relief. On this account it should come as no surprise to learn that, for Benjamin, the technological advance of photography after 1880, especially the faster lenses that "wholly overcame darkness and recorded appearances as faithfully as any mirror," "banished" the aura as assuredly as it enabled the photographer to capture the scene before him with greater clarity.[128]

Benjamin's focus on ephemeral experiences involving interiorizing remembrance is set in opposition to a cult of memory that enshrines the past as heritage.[129] For Benjamin, even the disappearance of the past was less disastrous than the cultural monuments, festivals, and invented traditions that served to commemorate the past in the present—a heritage industry that would come to operate at full tilt under German fascism.[130] To be sure, during the Nazi period the calendar was filled to excess with days of celebration. It might well come as a surprise to learn of a similarity between the tradition of storytelling and this aestheticization of politics: like the oral tradition of storytelling, the hyperritualistic nature of German fascist society sought to knit together personal and collective memory. Yet these fascist rituals, which drew on "Germanic" myths and symbols in order to manufacture recollection, were nothing if not vehicles of forced remembrance.[131] Just as he feared the atrophy of authentic experience (*Erfahrung*) within the seemingly ceaseless flow of passive lived experience (*Erlebnis*) that characterized his own day, so Benjamin witnessed the decay of involuntary remembrance in the wake of sanctioned memorialization. As the author was at pains to make clear, when the past is simply pressed into the service of an official or invented tradition, then the past is not so much saved from oblivion as it is consumed by history. This certainly occurs when the past is purposefully memorialized in a monument. As with monuments, so in the rituals and invented traditions of German fascism, memory is represented—fixed and frozen—as spectacle.[132]

Benjamin's worry about the reduction of authentic experience and, along with it, the loss of remembrance points, then, to his own historical context. His contemporaries Ernst Bloch and Siegfried Kracauer wrote on similar themes, expressing their concern for and fascination with the new German society. Yet Benjamin's interest in authentic experience and interiorizing remembrance radiates out from his own milieu. Just as involuntary memory had operated for Proust, so for Benjamin the "past can be seized only as an image that flashes up at the moment of its recognizability, and is never seen again."[133] While Proust and Benjamin agree on the ephemeral nature of involuntary memory, it is important to underscore that their search for lost time is poised toward different outcomes. As Peter Szondi has persuasively argued, Benjamin, unlike Proust, "does not wish to see things in their ahistorical essence. He strives instead for historical experience and knowledge. Nevertheless, he is sent back into the past, a past, however, which is open, not completed, and which promises the future. Benjamin's tense is not the perfect, but the future perfect in the fullness of its paradox: being future and past at the same time." "Benjamin's quest for time gone by, for lost time" is "a quest for the lost

future."[134] The ephemeral experience of the aura retrieves the past in the name of the future. In this sense, the aura resonates with the aims of Benjamin's historical practice.

## Historical Perception

To intervene in history, to counteract the loss of the past as well as the subsuming of the past in the present, Benjamin conceived of a new form of historical perception. Drawing on Kant's preface to the first *Critique,* Benjamin refers to his own historical method as "the dialectical—the Copernican—turn of remembrance [*Eingedanken*]." He continues:

> The Copernican Revolution in historical perception is as follows. Formerly it was thought that a fixed point had been found in "what has been," and one saw the present engaged in tentatively concentrating the forces of knowledge on this ground. Now this relation is to be overturned, and what has been is to become the dialectical reversal—the flash of awakened consciousness. . . . What Proust intends with the experimental rearrangement of furniture in matinal half-slumber, what Bloch recognizes as the darkness of the lived moment, is nothing other than what here is to be secured on the level of the historical, and collectively. There is a not-yet-conscious knowledge of what has been: its advancement has the structure of awakening.

If Kant had turned attention toward the subject, demonstrating in his *Critiques* how the cognitive faculties shape a world of experience, Benjamin sought to render the cognitive power of the perceiving subject on equal terms with intimations of prehistory, fleeting images of interiorizing remembrance, chance occurrences—those elements that interrupt the subject's capacity to organize nature, history, and time into abstract, chronological sequences of events and ideas. Focusing on the way elements of the past resurface—like a lightning flash—in the present, Benjamin aimed to recover neglected aspects of history. In this way, he writes, "politics attains primacy over history," as "awakening" enables one to consider both past and present from new perspectives.[135]

Needless to say, Benjamin's approach to the past differs markedly from nineteenth-century German historical science, especially the historical methods of Ranke and Treitsche that still found their share of proponents in the first decades of the new century. Benjamin not only disdained the positivistic regard for historical facts that underpinned these historical methods, but he also opposed any philosophy of history predicated on a Kantian notion of progress. Kant's idea of historical progress finds expression in what the philosopher termed the historical sign (*Geschichts-*

*zeichen*). Historical signs of progress in the past, Kant contends, permit one to infer that such progress will continue in future. In the absence of any direct and consistent laws, such as those that govern the natural sciences, historical signs impart consistency and a pulse of progress to history. Benjamin's conception of history is not based on any idea of progress; instead, it is aimed at retrieving the character of the past per se.[136]

Consider how the event of the French Revolution is approached by Kant and Benjamin. Kant, taking up the viewpoint of the judging spectator, celebrates the French Revolution as a historical sign of the progress of French society toward democracy.[137] Benjamin, concentrating instead on how the revolution was experienced by participants, focuses on the way the image of ancient Rome was "activated"—experienced anew by the present—in such a way that the past now "point[ed] the way to the utopian condition of a liberated society."[138] "History is the subject of a construction whose site is not homogenous, empty time," Benjamin writes, "but time filled by now-time [*Jetztzeit*]. Thus, to Robespierre ancient Roman was a past charged with now-time, a past which he blasted out of the continuum of history."[139] Countering the chronological and historical division of past and present, Benjamin sets past and present into a dialectical relation: If Robespierre was able to experience the modern in the archaic, this was because he felt the connection between the archaic and the modern.[140] Setting store by Robespierre's experience of Roman antiquity, Benjamin betrays the aim of his own historical practice: to interrupt the flow of chronological time, and the meanings assigned to the past by history, through *Jetztzeit*, now-time. "Neither instant nor present," *Jetztzeit* jolts the moment in such a way that elements of the past resurface to be experienced in the present. To experience history within now-time is, then, "to relaunch historiography as remembrance."[141]

If nineteenth-century historicism expended itself on linking the elements of the past into chronological, progressive, or teleological chains—chains, we might say, without intervals—the perceptual experience of age value and the aura mark an interval in which chronological time is stopped in its tracks, for an instant. Disrupting chronological time, severing the links in the chain of history, occasions of age value and the aura announce the severing of past and present that marked modernity. At the same time, in a manner akin to the "tiny, fragile human body" caught in "a force field of destructive torrents and explosions" (the figure on the battlefield poignantly described by Benjamin in the opening paragraphs of "Experience and Poverty"), age value and the aura offer the beholder a glimpse of what had the present had left behind in the drive toward modernity. Focusing on the overlooked, Riegl and Benjamin ask us to es-

cape received ideas and return to the bodies, objects, feelings and memories left behind in the sanctioned narratives of history. Correspondingly, they ask us to return to the material conditions under which images are produced.

If for Benjamin there was "no such thing as art history," this was because contemporary art-historical practice was both too narrow and too overreaching. Benjamin offers Wölfflin's formalism as a prime example of a method that, carried out within the strict confines of the art-historical discipline, failed to consider "the work of art as an integral expression of the religious, metaphysical, political, and economic tendencies of its age." And if Wölfflin's art history was too narrow, his assured moves from the individual work of art to the formal term missed what Benjamin called those "[essential] sources that are the most inaccessible." In a manner akin to nineteenth-century historicism, Wölfflin's method rests on two reductive moves: First, it abstracts a suite of terms from the complexities of aesthetic phenomena; second, these terms are pressed into service as the coordinates of a rationalized, stylistic grid. The way Wölfflin sets works of art within an intellectual field of fixed rather than relative values, as well as the point of view from which he conducts his formal analysis, is reminiscent of the connotations of Benjamin's phrase "imperial panorama": namely, the careful selection and arrangement of images in a visual or intellectual field, and their survey from a commanding vantage point.[142]

Just as Riegl sought to retrieve aesthetic objects lost to art history, so Benjamin aimed to rescue elements of the past—prehistory, tradition, the idea of nature as a continuum—lost to individual consciousness and modernity. Concentrating on the ways the past may be activated through ephemeral experiences in the present, allowing the past to break through the temporal frame of the present, Benjamin's historical practice resists the subordination of the past into "homogenous empty time." Whereas in the modern idea of history differences are subsumed into a single regularity of past, present, and future, in experiences of age value and the aura connotations of the past are set free from the shackles of chronological time.[143] In this way, intimations of a more original temporality emerge for the beholder to experience.

Riegl's age value and Benjamin's aura are tuned to the act of perception rather than to the time of history. Focusing on the interchange between subject and object, Riegl and Benjamin activate the object of perception. Refusing the easy slide of the image into history—to rest, there, in the comfortable and secure niches of author, style, and period—they open the image out to the full palette of its complexities. At the same time, demonstrating how meaning is engendered in the interaction between

subject and object, Riegl and Benjamin reveal the inherent historicity of the image. Setting subject and object within a force field where neither term can be permanently collapsed into the other, they offer an approach to the image that avoids the vantage point of a transcendental historical judge as well as any conception of the object as static.

Riegl and Benjamin, then, offer us a historical practice that encompasses production and reception. Focusing on the image in order to understand it as historical in the deepest sense, as the outcome of all the forces—personal, historical, material, metaphysical—that conspired in its creation, they indicate how historical meaning issues from an encounter with the object. Benjamin comments on his own historical practice:

> It is said that the dialectical method consists in doing justice each time to the concrete historical situation of its object. But that is not enough. For it is just as much a matter of doing justice to the concrete historical situation of the *interest* taken in the object. And *this* situation is always so constituted that the interest is itself preformed in that object and, above all, feels this object concretized in itself and upraised from its former being into the higher concretion of now-being [*Jetztsein*] (waking being!).[144]

Just as Benjamin's conception of now-time registers the instant when meaning is activated, so here he indicates how history is enacted at the intersection of past and present, image and experience. As Benjamin implies, it is not enough to consider historical images as past, as history. Rather, as Robespierre's encounter with ancient Rome indicates, historical practice "must do justice to the concrete historical situation of the *interest* in its object," since this interest brings with it the potential to see the past anew.[145] Conceiving past and present as relative to each other, Riegl and Benjamin demonstrate how the time of the work is not simply a moment in the past to be fully recovered "as it really was," but also an arrow pointing toward the future. Goethe remarked: "There is a delicate empiricism which so intimately involves itself with the object that it becomes true theory."[146] If, as Riegl and Benjamin suggest, theory begins with looking at the overlooked, then it may also lead to remembrance of what has been forgotten.

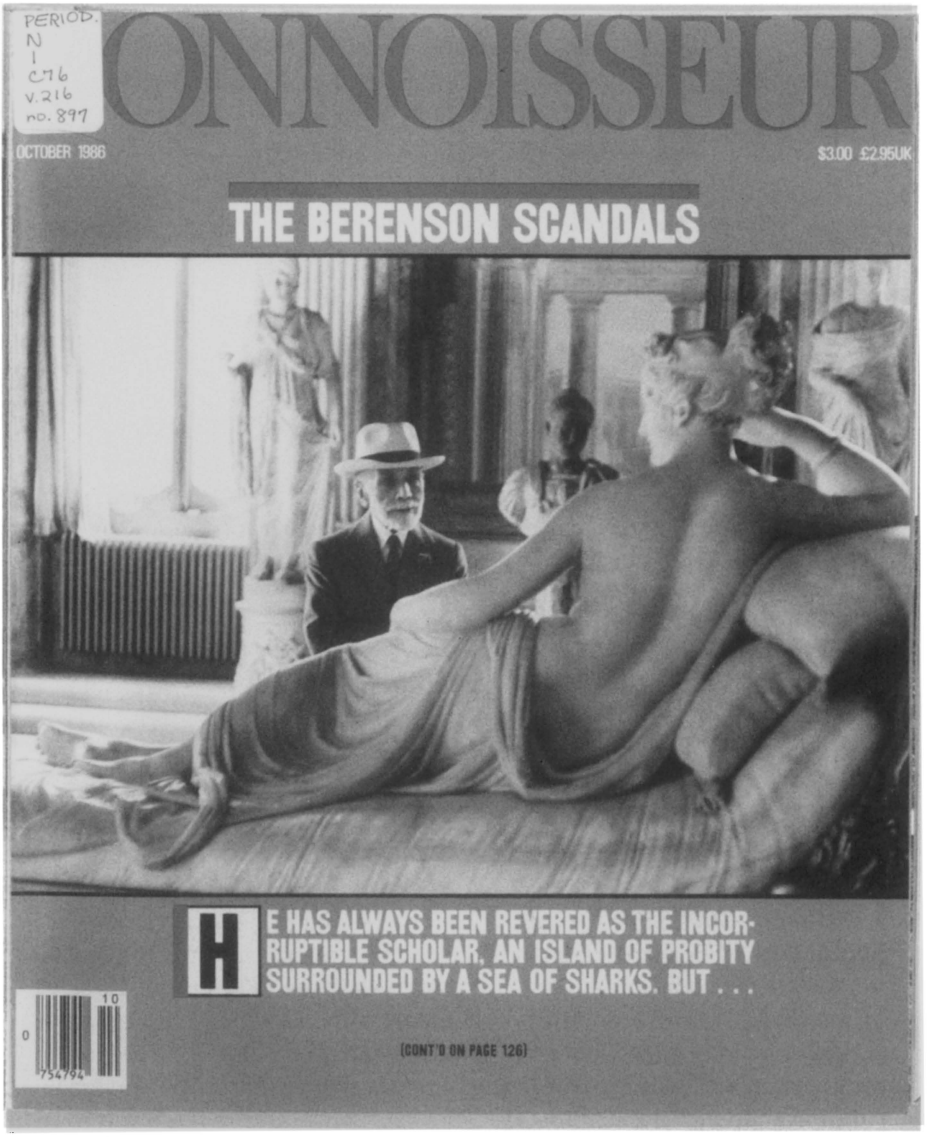
# *Conclusion*

## Encountering the Image

> If our aestheticians never weary of asserting in Kant's favor that, under the spell of beauty, one can *even* view undraped female statues "without interest," one may laugh a little at their expense: the experiences of *artists* on this ticklish point are more "interesting," and Pygmalion was in any event *not* necessarily an "unaesthetic man."
>
> FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

> The mutism of monuments and customs allows writing to inhabit their silence.
>
> MICHEL DE CERTEAU

I begin with an image and a scandal. The image is David Seymour's photograph of Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), casting a purportedly disinterested eye on Canova's well-known sculpture *Paolina Borghese as Venus* (fig. 41). The scandal, proclaimed on the October 1986 cover of *Connoisseur* magazine, concerns Berenson himself. The text beneath the photograph suggests a threat to the estimation of Berenson as "the incorruptible scholar," the connoisseur par excellence, the revered judge of Italian Renaissance art. Turning inside the cover, one discovers that the controversy stems from Colin Simpson's biography of Berenson, *Artful Partners.*[1] Using dealers' records and other correspondence, Simpson chronicles Berenson's Faustian pact with the American art dealer Joseph Duveen: for a 25 percent cut of the profits, Berenson used his inestimable reputation to certify the authenticity of Italian Renaissance paintings of dubious provenance. The scheme served both sides rather well—Simp-




41. David Seymour, "Bernard Berenson Looking at *Paolina Borghese as Venus,* by Antonio Canova," 1955. Published on the cover of *Connoisseur* (October 1986). Courtesy of David Seymour/Magnum Photos.

son makes clear that Berenson and Duveen became rich while several American magnates (the likes of Mrs. Horace E. Dodge, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Huntington, Samuel Kress, and Andrew Mellon), bilked of large sums of money, were none the wiser. In fact, according to Berenson and Duveen, these Americans were simply thrilled to be adding painted masterworks to their cultural capital.[2]

The Berenson scandal raises larger questions about art-historical practice. Who constitutes the proper aesthetic judge? Is objectivity possible in the history of art? Is there an immanent, unitary truth—or singular meaning—in the work of art, a "truth" or meaning to be discovered by the connoisseur or the art historian? What about the relation between subject and object? Is the male Bernard gazing at the female Paolina all too typical (of course it is), if not telling?[3] In order to address the conceptual presumptions on which these questions rest, this conclusion offers a reflection on the basic assumptions and general character of art history. I find myself in agreement with the historian Allan Megill when he remarks (at the onset of a recent essay on the discipline of history) that although "accounts could be offered that yield more complex and historically specific views, reflection . . . is important because there is a tendency for investigators . . . to miss precisely those features of a situation that are 'natural' to them." By reflecting on the basic assumptions and general character of art history through the figure of the connoisseur and notions of objectivity, I hope, with Megill, "to bring to light what would otherwise remain unexamined prejudice."[4]

Recall that the humanist subject has been perforce male, a reasonable rather than a carnal subject, one distinguished by the eye rather than the hand, by the intellect rather than the senses.[5] The connoisseur is an exemplary humanist subject. Rather than succumb to the rapture of the senses, the connoisseur trains his eye on the decoding of the work of art, offering the "truth" of the image in the form of a correct attribution. In this respect, connoisseurship depends on the primacy accorded to authorship in the history of art.[6] Consider how Sydney Freedberg describes Bernard Berenson in a 1989 issue of *The New Criterion:* "It was the conjunction in him of the finest, searching sensibility and the most precise weighing, measuring, and referential intelligence that made Berenson so extraordinary. In the history of art, such a conjunction of qualities defines a connoisseur, and *that,* as we have always recognized . . . was the most substantial part of his wide accomplishment, and the most influential."[7]

The connoisseur's exercise of reason—construed as exemplary judgment and objectivity in action—has lent to the history of art a certain scientific respectability. While connoisseurship accords rather well with art-historical protocols of objectivity and disciplinarity, it pivots around

a single mode of viewing. I want to argue for objectivity as a more complex affair than a Berenson-inspired form of connoisseurship would care to admit. I will suggest that the lure of the aesthetic object requires two forms of viewing—a simultaneous presence and distance that reverberates around a still point of uncertainty within the subject and the aesthetic object.[8]

I write, then, in order to reconceptualize objectivity rather than to disregard it.[9] Writing as I do from within the framework of the university (and of the discipline of art history in particular) necessitates the premise of objectivity even as, I would maintain, it begs a critique of the historical uses of this concept. Commenting on recent discourses of postmodernism, Hal Foster states this explicitly: "Critical distance cannot be foregone *and* it must be rethought; it does little good to lament or to celebrate its putative passing."[10] Just as our discipline requires the critical distance afforded through modes of objectivity, so does it depend on hypothesis and conjecture, those flights of thought from the perceptible world that may lead to greater understanding of what an object is and means. Rather than hold subjectivity and objectivity, facts and conjecture, and near and distant viewpoints in binary opposition, I will argue for their necessary interrelation.

## The Connoisseur

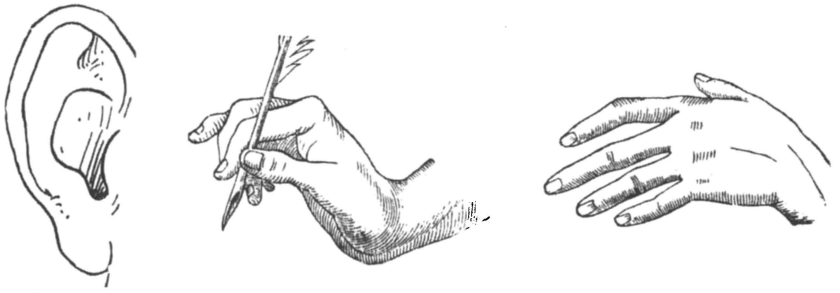
Berenson learned his technique from the Italian connoisseur Giovanni Morelli (1816–91). Between 1874 and 1876 Morelli caused a sensation among art historians with a series of critical articles on paintings by Italian old masters in the Borghese gallery. These articles appeared in the German art history journal *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst.*[11] Since Morelli believed museums were full of wrongly attributed paintings, including works unsigned, painted over, or in poor condition, it was very hard to distinguish copies from originals.[12] In order to remedy this state of affairs, Morelli proposed an experimental method of scientific connoisseurship for the attribution of paintings by old masters from the same school.[13]

In the introduction to *Italian Painters,* a revised edition of his earlier essays, Morelli mounts a defense of his own position and a pernicious critique of his detractors, particularly the art historian Wilhelm von Bode, the young yet well-respected director of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin.[14] Here, the author presents the rudiments of his method in the form of an imaginary dialogue between an elderly Florentine gentleman and a young Russian sightseer. Meeting by chance outside the Pitti

Palace, the two begin a conversation that immediately turns toward problems of art history and connoisseurship. The elderly gentleman remarks that the connoisseur, who looks at works of art incessantly, develops an understanding of art based on the gallery; the art historian, by contrast, who studies art from documentary evidence, misses the evidence of his own eyes, the evidence of the pictures themselves. It follows that—unlike the connoisseur, who develops his understanding of the works of a principal artist by relating them to works of other artists from the same school—the art historian, despite all his book learning, will reach only a general impression of works of art. The young Russian concurs with this distinction, adding his account of the dismal pedantry of the European art history professor. The moral of the tale, then, is this: "a man . . . [must] be a connoisseur before he can become an art-historian."[15]

Instead of seeking a general impression of a certain artist, the connoisseur focuses on original pictures in order to ascertain characteristic forms. According to Morelli, the characteristic forms of the artist are most visible in those areas of a picture where the artist exerts the least conscious control. So rather than attending to, say, composition, color, or gesture—pictorial elements for which training, tradition, or convention will play a considerable role—the connoisseur attends to subjects like drapery, earlobes, or the shape of a hand, elements for which the artist will develop his own conventions more freely (fig. 42). It is important to underline that for Morelli, the characteristic forms of the artist were not simply external features, as his critics were wont to suggest. Rather, for him, the external forms of the true artist, "determined [as they are] by inward conditions," serve as signs of "deeper quality in a work of art."[16] As indications of particular "inward conditions" or character, the characteristic forms enable the connoisseur to move beyond the general impressions of the art historian.

The effectiveness of Morelli's method rested on the connoisseur's long and careful study of authentic works of art. Indeed, the authentic work of art, or its photographic reproduction, was the starting point for him.[17] As Morelli argued more than once, his famous illustrations of characteristic forms—earlobes, hands, and so forth as painted by old masters—were not intended as ends in themselves. On the contrary, these forms "control the judgment which subjective impressions might lead us to pronounce."[18] Transposing these typical, "objective" forms of the authentic work of an artist onto works of questionable provenance permits the connoisseur to see for himself: either the hand corresponds to "the deeper quality" of a Botticelli—its bony fingers "not beautiful, but always full of life"—or it does not.[19] Morelli's focus on seemingly insignificant details rather than on more weighty artistic features like



42. Giovanni Morelli, ear and hands of Botticelli. Illustration from *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, 1874–76.

composition or expression served him well in his quest to separate the authentic from the inauthentic, the hand of the master from that of the imitator. The many attributions he made of paintings in the principal Italian and German picture galleries were often revolutionary. To cite just one example, it was Morelli who attributed *The Sleeping Venus* in the Dresden Gallery to Giorgione. The painting had been catalogued as a copy by Sassoferrato of a picture by Titian.

Morelli was not alone in devising an interpretative method "based on taking marginal and irrelevant details as revealing clues." Arthur Conan Doyle and Sigmund Freud, Morelli's better-known contemporaries, used similar techniques.[20] The fact that Doyle, Freud, and Morelli were medical doctors goes some way toward explaining their common focus on a model of medical semiotics or symptomatology. More to the point, however, is that tracing clues is part of a cultural history. As Carlo Ginzburg puts it: "Toward the end of the nineteenth century (more precisely in the decade 1870–1880), this 'semiotic' approach, a paradigm or model based on the interpretation of clues, had become highly influential in the field of the human sciences." Ginzburg contends that it was not by chance that a paradigm based on the interpretation of clues, itself slowly developing over several centuries, should come together at the end of the nineteenth century. After all, he writes, this model "coincided with the emergence of an increasingly clear tendency for state power to impose a close-meshed net of control on society."[21] The search for larger truths in reputedly incidental details would soon be deployed in the identification of citizens and criminals, processes which would include the use of fingerprints and police photographs.[22]

Medicine became the reference point for all the human sciences and

other conjectural methods, such as psychoanalysis or connoisseurship, became associated with it. Since these approaches relied more on the individual case than on the experimental method of Galilean science, they suffered from a marked decrease in the level of scientific content. Unlike the experimental scientist, who seeks "to measure and to repeat phenomena," the psychoanalyst and the connoisseur generalize from the study of individual cases.[23] Making an interpretative science out of mere conjecture eased this problem, as the freshly minted term "human sciences" lent an air of respectability to these new fields of study. For Ginzburg, Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes demonstrates that the interpretative methods of psychoanalysis and connoisseurship had caught the fancy of an entire society. Still, if the interpretative method of reading individual details made conjecture more scientific, and less like divination (its originary impulse), it could never be considered truly sound by the standards of experimental science.

While the connoisseur was not in any danger, then, of being mistaken for an experimental scientist, Morelli's so-called method of scientific connoisseurship was nevertheless criticized for being "mechanical, or crudely positivistic," for attempting to make the work of art an object of scientific, experimental method. Despite Morelli's success at reattribution, surely nobody "learns how to be a connoisseur or a diagnostician simply by applying the rules."[24] Certain factors, such as intuition, which cannot be measured quantitatively, play a steady role in making the conjectural leap from trace to attribution, from part to whole. Freedberg intimates as much when he notes the "conjunction of qualities" that comprise Berenson's penetrating mind.[25] In "Rudiments of Connoisseurship," Berenson himself distinguishes between scientific connoisseurship and "the Sense of Quality," a sense that "does not fall under the category of demonstrable things." Here is Berenson (the emphasis is his own): "*The greater the artist, the more weight falls on the question of quality in the consideration of a work attributed to him.*"[26] To be sure, the connoisseurship of Morelli and Berenson is more than an exercise in systematic classification and attribution. When considered as signs of a deeper, or even a transcendental, quality, the characteristic forms of an artist express a sense of artistic genius that is a priori—an indemonstrable sense of genius that does not exist independently of the work of art but is necessary for the work of art to be what it is.

It is important to note the way Berenson's "sense of quality," like Morelli's belief in the primacy of connoisseurship, emphasizes the eye and the work of art above all else. Here, "in a realm in which the authority of the connoisseur's eye reigns supreme," the work of art "can be fully appreciated and explained without reference to 'external' factors such as

patronage or social function."[27] Mapping "the various trends of art history" in 1903, Aby Warburg placed Morelli, Bode, and Berenson together under the category of "enthusiastic art historians." These "hero-worshippers" protect "the peculiar characteristics of their hero either through delimitation or through extension in order to understand him as a logically coherent organism." For Warburg, this "neutrally cool form of estimation happens to be the original form of enthusiasm peculiar to the propertied classes, the collector and his circle."[28]

What Warburg calls the "neutrally cool form of estimation," the disinterest or detachment of the connoisseur, is reminiscent of the bearing of the experimental scientist. The connoisseur practices detachment in a double sense. First, he detaches the form of the work of art from its content. Second, he searches for incidental forms as clues for attribution. As he dissociates the work of art bit by bit, so he detaches himself from his experience of it, concentrating, then, not on a sensual or bodily response, but on an intellectual response. This rational detachment—from the aesthetic object itself and of the connoisseur from himself—makes connoisseurship "a solid craft."[29] Exercising his "searching sensibility," and the "weighing" and "measuring" of his "referential intelligence," Berenson demonstrates how the visual gives authority. Reason then operates in concert with the visual in order to turn what is seen into an attribution.

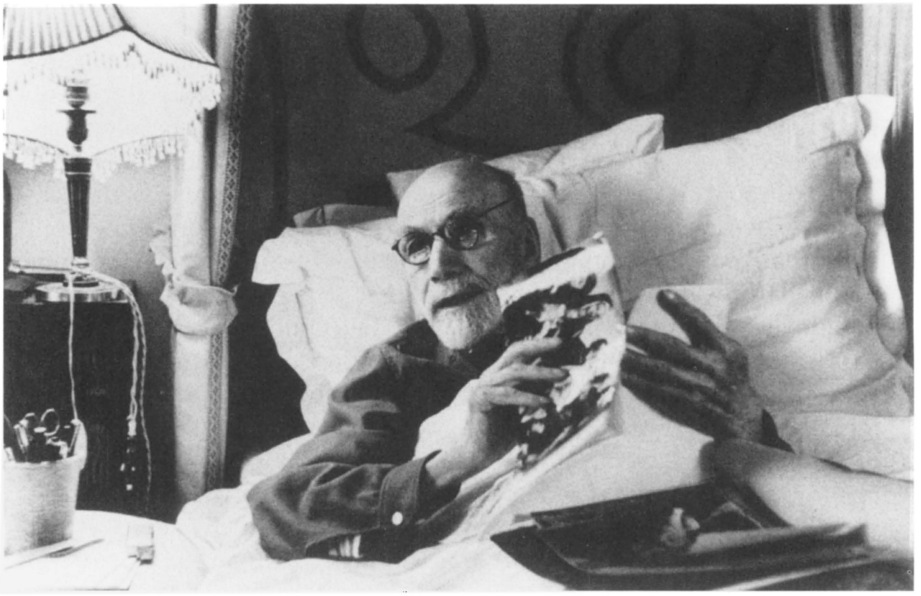
## Manners and Modes of Objectivity

Turning on the primacy of the visual, the constitution of the connoisseur's authority rests on a collection of qualities similar to those required for the authority of the ethnographer. James Clifford, in 1983, defined those qualities as presence in front of the object, perceptual ability, "disinterested" perspective, and sincerity.[30] In order to underscore the primacy of the visual, accounts of the connoisseur are by and large written in the present tense.[31] Despite its frequent ahistorical—its synchronic—pretense, connoisseurship is historically determined by the moment of the connoisseur's encounter with the work of art he is studying.[32] Yet just as the connoisseur's own body is left out of account, his vantage point on the object is sufficiently generalized so as to offer a "'totalistic' presentation" of the object he is describing.[33] Aping the stance of the experimental scientist, the connoisseur utilizes objective and transcendental points of view to decode the work of art. Acknowledging neither his own historical position nor the provisional nature of his interpretation, the connoisseur constitutes his authority at the same time as his written account closes in on itself.

Even as the Berenson scandal reveals the interest at the heart of one connoisseur's masquerade of disinterest, it demonstrates the constitution of the connoisseur's authority. Lest we forget, Berenson made a fortune certifying Italian Renaissance paintings for his rich American customers. If connoisseurship marks an achievement of reason over sensual response, then objectivity represents a corresponding rhetorical achievement—a device through which to establish the validity of the connoisseur's account. I have argued that connoisseurship presupposes a kind of neutral, authoritative view. Although here the visual gives authority, a notion underlined by the present tense of the connoisseur's account, in a seemingly paradoxical rhetorical move the body of the connoisseur evaporates as the "truth" content of his account, his attribution, materializes. The move I am suggesting here involves a shift in perspective: the connoisseur must initially establish his authorial presence but then "shift to the standpoint of the impersonal agent."[34] As the connoisseur's physical and historical position slides into what Thomas Nagel has felicitously described as "the view from nowhere," the certainty of his attribution renders the object of his consideration, the work of art, into a kind of Baconian fact—an object free from all theory.[35]

This last point is rather wonderfully illustrated in a suite of photographs of Berenson at work in the Villa I Tatti, studying photographs of Italian Renaissance paintings sent to him by his American customers.[36] By this time, Berenson's eye had acquired such authority that he no longer needed to be present in front of the original work of art. By putting his name to the photograph, Berenson attests to having "seen" the painting as well as to its correct attribution (figs. 43 and 44). The signature "Berenson" signifies the historical person and the impersonal agent. By signing the photograph, Berenson registers the move from authorial presence to connoisseurial authority, as his signature, his testament to the authenticity of the painting represented in the photograph, moves the image into the precincts of the "true" and the "factual."

In order to articulate a bit more carefully what I intend by rhetorical objectivity it may be useful to consider the personification of history in *Historia,* an engraving in the Hertel edition of Ripa's *Iconologia* (fig. 45). The female figure, Historia, is "derived from the classical winged victory, who recorded the victor's deeds on a shield."[37] In this version she stands on the sure block of truth, composing her account on the wings of Time, who holds his attribute, the sickle, and the serpent ring of eternity. She turns away from the actual experience of events in order to conceive her "objective" description of them. As in Hegel's famous description of the Owl of Minerva, Historia records events after they have taken place: this is the point of view that accounts for the events of time and history from



43. David Lees, "Bernard Berenson Examining Photos." Courtesy of Lorenzo Lees.

a vantage point above or beyond these events—an impassioned account of history, perhaps, but nonetheless objective.

Whether standing in front of the work of art or turning away from an event in order to record it, the connoisseur and the personification of history meet on the register of rhetorical objectivity. More specifically, connoisseurship rests on the overlapping concepts of absolute and procedural objectivity. In his introduction to *Rethinking Objectivity,* Megill notes how absolute and procedural objectivity work to dispel subjectivity.[38] In this way, absolute and procedural objectivity operate as devices for rendering representation, a written text, commensurate with presence—the presence of the aesthetic object in the connoisseur's account or the presence of the event in the historian's narrative. Presence, effected through the effacement of the historian or the connoisseur, places primacy on the written text. Tracing the tides of meaning of *Historia* in the ancient Greek, Jack Greenstein encounters this turn from seeing to writing.

> *Historia* derives from *histor,* the Greek word for a skilled witness or a judge expert at discovering through inquiry a reliable account of a disputed mat-

44. Photograph of *Madonna and Child in a Landscape*, School of Giovanni Bellini, 1490–1500. With attribution on the margin by Bernard Berenson. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Gallery Archives.

45. *Historia*, designed by Gottfried Eichler the Younger, engraved by Jacob Wangner, 1760, metal engraving on paper. From *Des berühmten italiänischen Ritters Caesaris Ripae* (Augsburg: Johann Georg Hertel, 1758–60). Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

> ter concerning persons, things, or events. At first, *historia* referred to the activity of the *histor,* that is, to his skilled observation and to the inquiries he made into matters that he himself had not witnessed. However, . . . the word soon took on a somewhat different meaning. Instead of designating the autopsies—that is, literally, "acts of seeing with one's own eyes"—and interviews of the histor, *historia* came to denote the results or the product of the investigation. This new sense of *historia* invested history with an ambiguity it has retained ever since. *Historia* signified both the reliable information that the historian uncovered and the literary form or the written account in which this information was presented.[39]

Like *Historia,* art history is comprised of seeing and writing, and so with acceptable standards of reliable information and literary form. Objectivity, a concept capacious enough to encompass seeing and writing, process and result, enables the turn from seeing to writing just as it enables seeing, object, and text to inhabit the same supposedly neutral conceptual space. As Nietzsche makes clear in an epigraph to this chapter, however, objective narratives presume detached responses to monuments that are themselves rendered all but silent. Indeed, as Michel de Certeau evocatively suggests, the "mutism of monuments and customs allows writing to inhabit their silence."[40]

Absolute objectivity, "the view from nowhere," presupposes "universal rational assent."[41] Absolute objectivity implies both the vantage point of the so-called omniscient eye, gazing down on all that transpires, and the point of view of every person—a common standpoint.[42] The procedural sense of objectivity overlaps rather naturally with absolute objectivity in a shared claim for certainty. Whereas absolute objectivity is located on that imagined frontier where an individual judgment could be deemed universal, procedural objectivity supplies "the view from nowhere" with a set of equally impersonal procedures. Like Morelli's attention to earlobes or fingernails, the rules of procedural objectivity offer a means of standardization. Not surprisingly, procedural objectivity not only brings about the standardization of objects; it also "brings with it a standardization of subjects"[43]—subjects who, in an absolutely objective guise, would be divested of all contours of individuality and historical specificity.

Kenneth Gergen has used the metaphor of the machine to describe the way in which "the appeal to objectivity" is used "to sustain and fortify the image of human functioning."[44] The image of the mechanical self also relies on the modality of vision: "One writes of the ideal relationship of the knower to the known as that of a mirror to its object, a picture to its subject. When functioning soundly, the mind of the mechanical self is a

reliable visual record of the world."[45] The ideal mind of the mechanical self is transparent to its object—no longer burdened with the idiosyncrasies of the individual human mind, the mechanical mind renders the object or picture fully present just as the individual human mind is rendered fully absent. Even if we agree that intuition plays a decisive role in the making of an attribution, we may nevertheless note the way in which intuition is simultaneously acknowledged and superceded in, for example, Sidney Freedberg's description of Berenson's connoisseurship: the phrases "most precise weighing, measuring, and referential intelligence" suggest the manner in which reason operates to organize and unify perceptual data.

Berenson may have proceeded from the standpoint of absolute objectivity, operating *as if* his vision and his signature garnered absolute authority. Just as Berenson's signature on the photograph of an Italian Renaissance painting registers the move from authorial presence to authority, so the connoisseur's account closes in on itself around its supposed truth claims—"one is correct in identifying this work as a Botticelli." In reality, however, a claim for absolute objectivity can never be made by a single individual. Adopting the viewpoint of the "omniscient eye" would require one to be subject and object of thought, to think and reflect simultaneously along a line of infinite regress. To put this another way, adopting the standpoint of the omniscient eye would require one to think a thought, to make that thought into an object of one's reflection, and so on, ad infinitum. Instead of the workings of an omniscient eye, the Berenson scandal demonstrates that objectivity is a process of knowledge production carried out by individuals as well as institutions.[46]

Art history participates in its own version of disciplinary objectivity. Just as procedural objectivity "brings with it a standardization of subjects," so the disciplinary sense of objectivity attempts to subordinate the subject to the group. Bound up with the "dynamics of the modern academic enterprise, which is sharply divided by discipline and field and rent by competing claims to authority," disciplinary objectivity provides an "insistent unity," as art historians, for instance, participate in "a collective, unified search for knowledge."[47] On the one hand, it would be intriguing to note the ways the "insistent unity" of the discipline of art history compensates for the still point of uncertainty within the aesthetic object and the viewing subject. On the other hand, it is useful to note that while disciplines are constraining, they are also absorptive: art history may borrow its methods from any field so long as these methods meet certain—often unarticulated—epistemological and operational criteria. In this way, disciplinary objectivity provides a kind of tacit professional

agreement, though we may each approach an aesthetic object with a different methodological tool kit.

Just as the connoisseur overcomes the lure of the object through modes of objectivity, so, I would argue, is the work of art made rational through art history's methodological protocols. Drained of the aura surrounding the tribal or religious fetish, the discourse of art history provides only its late-capitalist remains. The words "greatness," "genius," and "masterpiece" reverberate along the alleys of art-historical discourse as rational remnants of the power of images. As floating signifiers separated from an actual experience of works of art, "genius," "greatness," and "masterpiece," become normative terms in their own right, terms that may then be easily pressed into ideological service. The image of Berenson signing photographs in his Italian villa is one case in point.

While the classification of a *unique* work of art may appear to offer nothing short of an epistemological paradox, art history has resolved this dilemma rather well through its primary analytical category: style.[48] Like the connoisseur's focus on earlobes or fingernails, the attribution of a particular style to a work of art is the result of an "objective" reading of its individual marks. A masterpiece would then be an exemplary case of a particular artist's style, while style itself would bind the object to others of its type, forming, in this way, a classification system similar to those used in the natural sciences. In either case, form is divorced from content. This splitting up of form and content, or what T. S. Eliot referred to in modern poetry as a "dissociation of sensibility," strips the art object of its power and complexity.[49]

## Two Forms of Viewing

Connoisseurship may insistent on a neutral, authoritative view, and yet, as David Seymour's photograph of Berenson makes clear, vision is always the view of someone from somewhere. To acknowledge our presence, to admit of a view from somewhere, is to raise the question of how the objects of our accounts are produced. Admitting of a view from somewhere opens up the connoisseur's truth claims to interpretation, as it invites us to take full measure of the fact that subjectivity is always a part of the objectivity paradigm. Indeed, "subjectivity is indispensable to the constituting of objects."[50] In closing this book, I would like to argue for a dialectical sense of objectivity. As I hope will become clear in what follows, dialectical objectivity is particularly apposite for the history of art.

In order to define what I intend by dialectical objectivity it may be

46. Eric Fischl, *The Sheer Weight of History,* 1982, oil on canvas. Courtesy of Eric Fischl Studio. Photograph by Zindman/Fremont.

helpful to consider Eric Fischl's painting of 1982, *The Sheer Weight of History* (fig. 46). Fischl sets our understanding off balance with a powerful redescription. Here time has flown away, leaving Historia—rendered as the famous sculpture of the sleeping hermaphrodite in the Uffizi Gallery—to fall face down on her block of truth. While it might be argued that the sleeping hermaphrodite is not a version of the figure of Historia (fig. 45), for Fischl an aspect of the sheer weight of history is the art of the past. The sleeping hermaphrodite, an image Fischl finds compelling, is also the point of departure for Pierre Bonnard's lush painting of 1900,

*Siesta.*[51] Nevertheless, as Holland Cotter rightly notes, Fischl's relationship to art-historical models is "cannily ambivalent."[52] At the same time as he deeply respects art history, Fischl brings his models up to date. In Fischl's painting, which looks neither back toward the past (symbolized by the portrait busts of Roman senators on the wall) nor toward the future, Historia has lost her rational pursuit. If the 1760 engraving lends credence to the possibility of possessing the past in chronicle or narrative form, then Fischl's painting intimates the cultural and historiographical shifts that have transformed our relation to the past and our belief in an ability to contain and convey the past in a unitary form. *The Sheer Weight of History* underlines the condition of history as one of dispossession, as it powerfully demonstrates how modes of visual rhetoric and subjective investment seek to negotiate this condition.

Fischl makes note of the ways memory serves to bring the past to light. At the same time, he shows why, in spite of the most vigorous efforts of the historian, the past remains forever lost to us in its plenitude. Like the small boy underneath the marble hermaphrodite, who sucks his thumb in the absence of his mother's breast, we inhabit the rooms of history, dreaming of full possession as we write narratives that can only serve as substitutes—as parts for the whole. Resting on the block of truth, the figure of Historia indicates the possibility of the past through possession, a continuous flow of history that partakes of a unitary meaning—a "truth" of the past. Rendering Historia as the sleeping hermaphrodite, Fischl points to the possibility of rupture at the heart of subjectivity and objectivity, just as he indicates our desire to repair this disruption. If the 1760 engraving invokes the possibility of standing aside from events in order to record them "objectively," the 1982 painting demonstrates our participation in a past we strive to order, collect, or otherwise represent.

*The Sheer Weight of History* registers the interdependency of objectivity and subjectivity. From the portrait busts carefully aligned on the wall to the small boy sucking his thumb underneath the marble hermaphrodite, Fischl holds together seeing and reflecting in a powerful image. The dynamic tension between the standpoint of someone from somewhere—the artist, the boy, the viewer—and the sheer weight of a history rendered from the standpoint of no one in particular renders the canvas into a force field where objectivity and subjectivity collide and repel. As in Goethe's, Warburg's, and Cassirer's conceptions of the polarity of the symbol, here subjectivity and objectivity—chaos and cosmos—serve as the oscillating points of an ellipse of this and that, that and this. The separation between this and that required for chronology, objectivity, and a philosophy of history predicated on these notions, is undercut by the continuous movement between two poles. By holding together subjectivity and objectivity,

Fischl demonstrates, as did Wittgenstein, that there is no such thing as a private language. Just as the impossibility for an individual to achieve the "omniscient eye" demonstrates the fallacy of absolute objectivity, so the impossibility for a private language bares the ruse of a notion of absolute subjectivity. Similarly, even though the connoisseur may provide a painting with a correct attribution, the work of the art historian, who labors on behalf of interpretation, indicates the inability to provide the painting with an ultimate meaning. Morelli and Berenson may have tried to make a science out of art, yet art history trades in aesthetic objects, objects for which the truth claims of any interpretation nestle around a still point of uncertainty.

A dialectical sense of objectivity does not just presume the interdependency of objectivity and subjectivity. It also relies on two modes of viewing, a relay of presence and distance that is particularly appropriate for aesthetic objects. Aby Warburg remarks in a notebook of 1928: "The creation and the enjoyment of art demand the viable fusion between two psychological attitudes which are normally mutually exclusive. A passionate surrender of the self leading to a complete identification with the present—and a cool and detached serenity which belongs to the categorizing contemplation of things. The destiny of the artist can really be found at an equal distance between the chaos of suffering excitement and the balancing evaluation of the aesthetic attitude."[53] Warburg was not alone in recognizing that art required two modes of viewing. Goethe, Schiller, and Nietzsche understood this before him, as did Cassirer, Wind, and Benjamin in the 1920s.[54]

Most recently, J. Hillis Miller has discussed this idea in relation to literature. The aporia of literature, he explains, requires that one negotiate, or hold in tension, two modes of reading: reading *allegro* and reading *lente*. This distinction directly relates to the viewing of works of art, which requires the engagement and suspension of disbelief of reading *allegro*, and the critical, cognitive engagement of reading *lente*. In accord with Nietzsche's understanding of aesthetic observation, reading *allegro* turns on rapture, a condition Miller wonderfully describes as "being forcibly drawn out of oneself into another realm"—a realm one might call the space of the aesthetic.[55] Enraptured during his skyward gaze, transported by his view of the heavens, Thales fell into a well. Literature, Miller notes, offers an "invitation to dwell with sympathy in a fictitious world."[56] Aesthetic space, one might say, is a realm where artist, writer, beholder, and reader venture the laughter of the Thracian maid in their contemplation of visual and theoretical points of view, both distant and near. If art, like literature, requires that one hold in tension two modes of viewing, then it is art history that renders aesthetic space into a realm of

cool idols—a disciplinary field in which the work of art is simultaneously revered and denatured through classification and modes of objectivity.

The point, I should like to underline, is not that connoisseurship or the intellect is the enemy of art, for one certainly experiences a work of art more fully when the mind can help guide the eye. Rather, the point is that art requires engagement. By focusing on an intellectual response, art history has denatured the work of art and our response to it. If we were to believe Edgar Wind, then we would note how our discipline has made us all "something like unconscious Morellians."[57] Arguing for a dialectical sense of objectivity, I do not intend a reversal of the subject/object binary. I do not intend the revival of the personal voice or the marking of aspects of identity after their evacuation in art history's "objective" narratives, though I believe that opening up art history to a range of subjectivities and identity politics is important for several reasons, not least of which is the way this opening up places pressure on the belief that a system of signification can represent an object or a person in its full presence.[58] On the contrary, I wish to underline the still point of uncertainty that lies at the heart of our endeavor. This creates, or is part of, the lure of the object—it is part of what drives us to know the object, or ourselves, though ultimately we cannot.

The unknowability of the art object underscores why, in the history of art, theory begins with looking. If theory begins with looking, or as Goethe famously put it, "every fact is already theory," subject and object cannot be construed as entirely independent of one another. It follows that if subject and object are conceived as in any way intertwined, this belies the notion of unmediated experience. Panofsky's critique of Wölfflin's literal understanding of "seeing, the eye, and the optical" points out the fallacy of an unmediated, mechanical relation between the eye and the perceptible world.[59] Even Kant, who characterizes the sublime as a passage between sensuous experience and the idea of reason, indicates the role of embodiment in aesthetic experience when he suggests how reason and nature lie at the foundations of the subject. My rereading of nature and reason in Kantian subjectivity as a fundamental dualism in dialectical relation does not diminish the quality of the philosopher's conception of aesthetic judgment or its foundational importance for the history of art. Instead, I argue that opening Kantian subjectivity to a dialectic of nature and reason offers to aesthetic experience a range of sensuous responses. Encountering the image is thus transformed into an experience inclusive of the supposedly primitive fears and emotions that were the subject of Warburg's investigations, the notion of time that Riegl's concept of age value suggested, and, finally, the intimations of authentic experience and remembrance that Benjamin believed must be in-

cluded in an expanded compass of aesthetic experience. To say, then, that the work of art ultimately cannot be reduced to knowledge and language does not foreclose the possibility of rigorous investigation or systematicity. It is to say that the work of art will never be fully captured in the net of "scientific" connoisseurship or any other scientifically inspired system.

The still point of uncertainty in the image reminds me of why, at the end of the eighteenth century, Kant characterized the work of art as "purposive without a purpose." By purposive, he meant the way the aesthetic object displayed "a unified form in itself and in its structure," which was necessary in order for us to be able to perceive it as an object. By purpose, he meant an "external determination." "A purposive creation has its center of gravity in itself; one that is goal-oriented has its center of gravity external to itself; the worth of the one resides in its being, that of the other in its results."[60] As "purposive without a purpose," the work of art is equated with morality in Kant's philosophy. Like the human being, the work of art is not a means to an end but an end in itself. Despite the ways aesthetic phenomena may be pressed into service—in the connoisseur's account, in the art historian's narrative, or in consumer culture or advertising—the aesthetic object remains a stubbornly ethical presence in the age of global capitalism.

# *Afterword*

## Toward an Aesthetic Way of Knowing

> One was successful: he lifted the veil of the goddess at Saïs. What did he see, then? —He saw, wonder of wonders—himself.
>
> NOVALIS

> We recognize a work of art by the fact that no idea it inspires in us, no mode of behavior it suggests we adopt, could ever exhaust it or dispose of it. We may inhale the smell of a sweet-smelling flower as long as we like; we cannot rid ourselves of the fragrance that has aroused our senses, and no recollection, no thought, no mode of behavior can obliterate its effect or release us from the hold it has on us. Anyone who undertakes to create a work of art aims at the same effect.
>
> PAUL VALÉRY

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* published in 1947, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno describe the mythic origins and contemporary effects of Enlightenment progress. The book begins with "Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment," an excursus by Adorno on Homer's epic wanderer.[1] Odysseus, whose sense of life is fragile and who struggles to preserve the newly constructed self against the overpowering forces of nature, served well as an illustration of Adorno's account of the mythic origins of enlightenment. For Horkheimer and Adorno, the turning points of Western civilization are marked by the emergence of new peoples or classes who have succeeded in ever more strenuously repressing their fear of "uncomprehended, threatening nature," a fear that is itself the creature of at-

tempts to objectify and materialize nature. Myth is reduced to "superstition," and the domination of nature is made into the absolute purpose of life. Yet as Adorno demonstrates in his excursus, the domination of nature entails a certain sacrifice on the part of the subject himself: The nature Odysseus slays in the external world—most memorably captured in his episode with the Sirens—is, at the same time, the nature he sacrifices within himself.[2]

For Odysseus as well as for the Kantian subject, the journey into rational subjectivity entails an overcoming of internal and external nature. While Odysseus slays nature through the cunning of reason, the Kantian subject confronts nature in the aesthetic experience only to find himself superior to it. This is most powerfully demonstrated in Kant's analytic of the sublime.[3] Unlike their philosophical forebear, Horkheimer and Adorno do not view the overcoming of nature as an unequivocal sign of progress. Instead, they consider the movement from nature to reason dialectically.

As *Dialectic of Enlightenment* indicates, the production of a self occurs only once instinct—or nature—has been overcome by reason, and this is registered through the exercise of self-consciousness. For the "proto-bourgeois" Odysseus and, so Horkheimer and Adorno argue, for all bourgeois subjects, self-consciousness occurs at the expense of the subject's own nature.[4] Odysseus signals the achievement of self-consciousness by the beating of his breast, thereby making clear that his victory is one over his own nature. Rather than submit to the rule of the instincts and desires, the newly self-conscious Odysseus is able to exercise more thoroughly his faculty of reason. This enables him to win his battle with the forces and manifestations of nature he encounters. Yet as Horkheimer and Adorno make clear in their nightmare version of an instrumental reason run amok, in time this reason comes to dominate the subject himself. Considered in this way, representation is "the vehicle of both progress and regression."[5] As progress, representation indicates the slaying of an internal and external nature that had formerly dominated the subject; in its denial of nature of the space between things, however, representation is regressive.[6]

Homer's *Odyssey* and the Kantian philosophical enterprise demonstrate how the subject of reason is perforce male.[7] Nature, on the other hand, is customarily gendered female.[8] In the history of art, nature—a realm left behind in the triumphant march toward rational subjectivity and Enlightenment progress—makes her appearance in the guise of personification. The performance of the idealized Kantian subject in art history will therefore be a drama played out between male and female, wherein the female will be equated with nature, while the male will serve

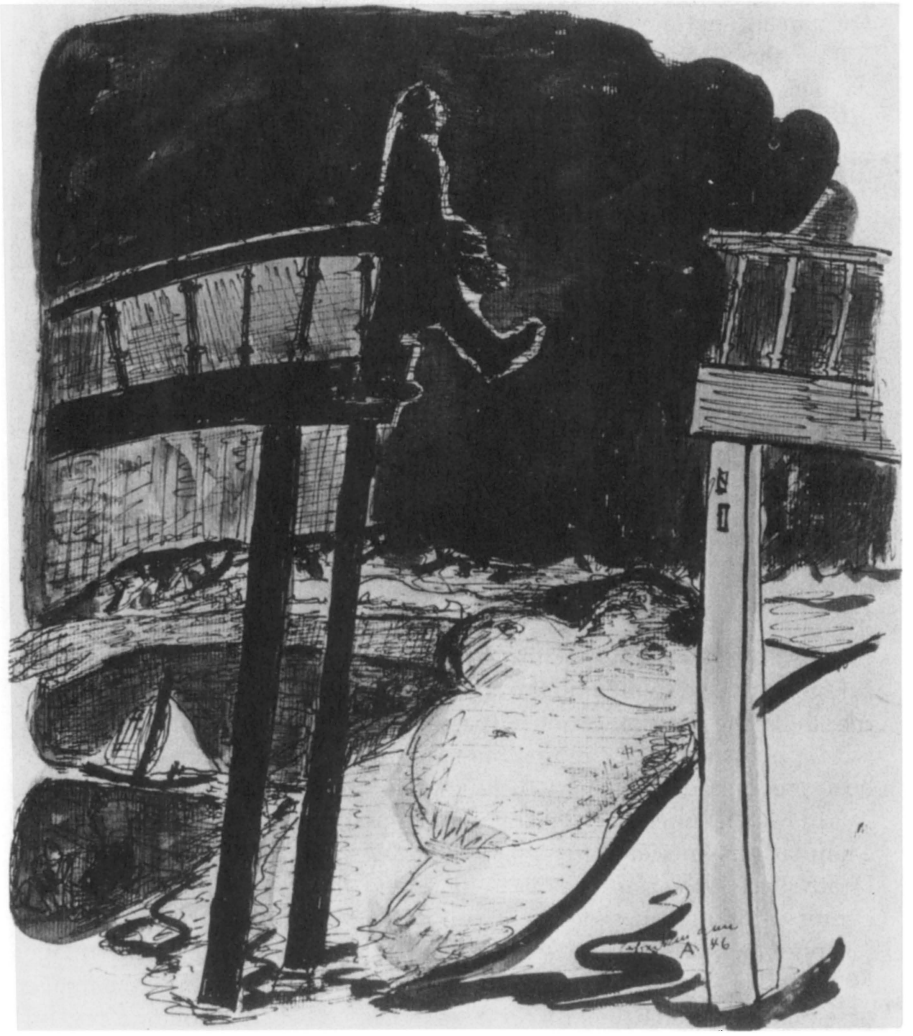
as artist, philosopher, or ideal spectator. To be sure, the conflation of woman and nature, or the personification of nature, is not a natural fact. Rather these constructions, and the artistic conventions to which they have given rise, dramatize the need to secure the idealized Kantian subject from the internal and external nature that continually threatens his undoing.

## The Journey of the Idealized Kantian Subject

In the history of art we encounter reverberations of the philosophical journey of the Kantian subject, or so it appears when we consider three graphic works by German artists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Max Beckmann's pen-and-pencil drawing of February 1946, *A Walk (The Dream),* the artist depicts himself taking a nocturnal stroll along a high bridge (fig. 47).[9] Beckmann vividly described a long walk in his diary during the month this drawing was made, noting how "the sea was once again the sea and said good day Mr. Beckmann."[10] In the chasm separating the darkness on the left-hand side of the drawing from the light on the right, a colossal, supine female form lies across an expanse of water. The nocturnal walker, who steps off the end of the bridge, is poised to fall into the lap of recumbent nature. Like the song of the sirens, the personification of the sea beckons this latter-day Odysseus, who appears to have no option but to fall, as his journey into the light has been preempted by the very disjuncture of the bridge itself.

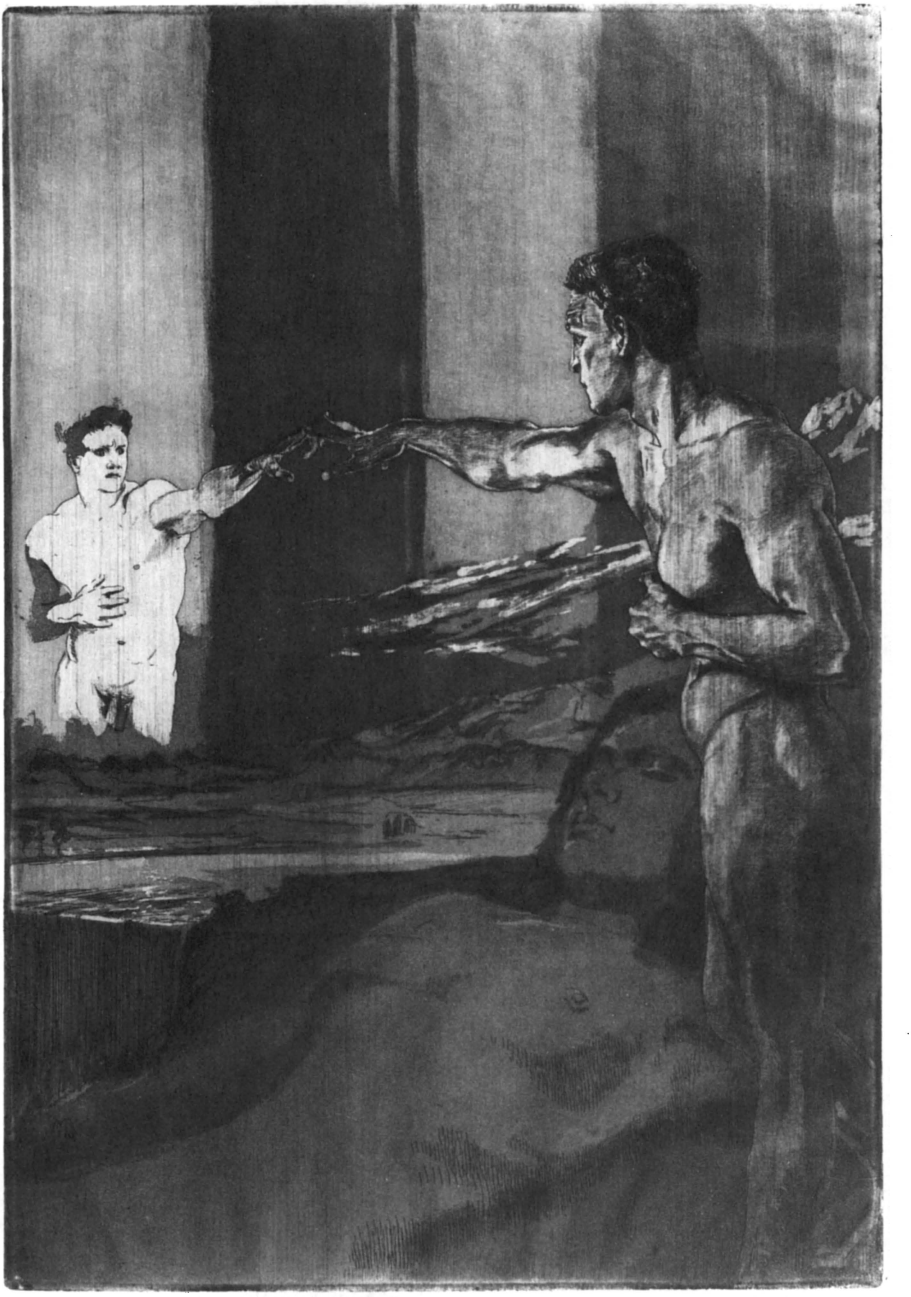
In Max Klinger's 1900 etching and aquatint, *The Philosopher,* we find a similar mis-en-scène (fig. 48).[11] The third in a suite of prints titled On Death, Part II, the philosopher is conceived along with the ruler and the genius (artist) as an exemplary individual.[12] Klinger portrays the philosopher, perhaps himself, standing naked and upright beside an image of a colossal, supine woman. As in the drawing by Beckmann, the image of female nature in Klinger's print is suspended between solid ground on one side and water on the other, just as her form marks a divide between regions of darkness and light. Shifts in scale, such as those of the woman and the philosopher who stands upright beside her, and combinations of vertical hatching and ink washes, produce a richly textured, fantasy world. As in so many of Klinger's prints, the focus in *The Philosopher* is on a decisive moment, one that suggests a narrative not directly revealed.[13]

Concentrating the action in the print on the moment of beholding, Klinger presents the philosopher reaching beyond the personification of nature to the lighted realm, and to his own mirror image, on the other side of her body. As if to underscore the separation of woman and man, of na-



47. Max Beckmann, *A Walk (The Dream)*, 1946, pen and pencil. Private Collection.

ture and reason, Klinger's image of a slumbering nature does not find her reflection in the mirror, a visual fact made all the more poignant by her monumentality relative to the questing male figure. Taking his inspiration from the writings of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), particularly his *Parerga and Paralipomena*, Klinger here depicts the limits of self-recognition.[14] According to Schopenhauer, the only

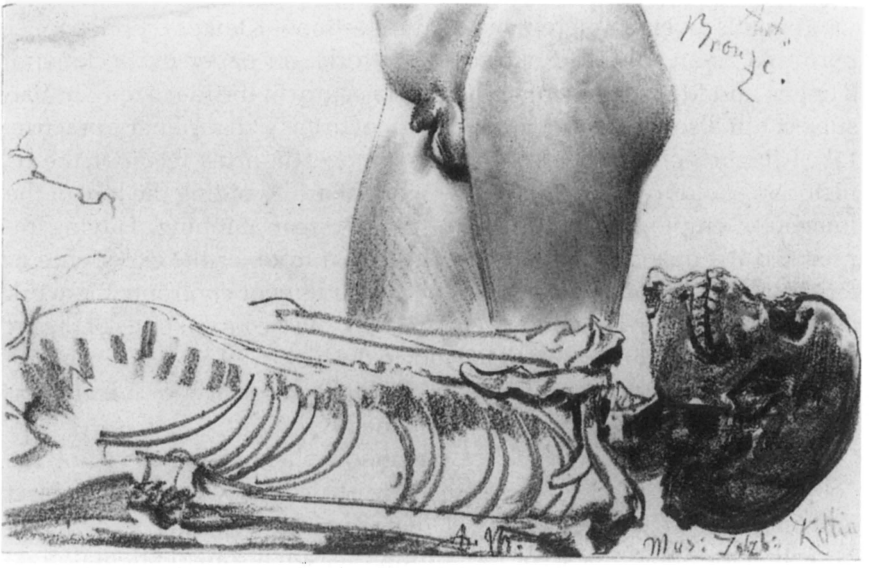


48. Max Klinger, *The Philosopher,* 1885–1900, aquatint. Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig. Photograph by Ursula Gerstenberger.

true path for philosophy is through the interiority of the subject. The philosopher can, however, never know the knowing subject since one can never be both knower and known subject simultaneously.[15] Separated from himself as an onlooker, the philosopher enacts the disjuncture between the perceiving subject and the object of his knowledge. It is nature, personified through the body of a woman, and her realm, namely, the murky waters of imagination and the indeterminate, which shape the space between darkness and light, the space between the merely perceiving subject and the truth that is the object of his pursuit. As nature, the slumbering woman is likewise an emblem of mortality; according to Schopenhauer, death offers the only release from the separation of subject and object.

In the manner of an idealized Kantian subject, the philosopher of Klinger's print accommodates the limits of self-recognition by standing to reason over and above internal and external nature. The German romantic poet Novalis likewise makes clear the philosopher's dilemma: "One was successful: he lifted the veil of the goddess at Saïs. What did he see, then?—He saw, wonder of wonders—himself."[16] If reason drives the philosopher to know the truth, then, as Novalis makes clear, what he discovers is merely his own reflection.[17] Nature, slain and slumbering, does not figure in this reflection—in Klinger's print she is, after all, not reflected in the mirror. What is depicted in Klinger's image is an act of representation and of domination: of the representation of knowledge, of the domination of nature in pursuit of that knowledge. This is the configuration of knowledge we find in the Cartesian cogito, wherein thinking defines subjectivity, and nature is at best an absent presence. Performing as an idealized subject, Klinger's philosopher reflects himself as himself, and not as nature, or what he is not (A = A, and not B).

If Klinger's philosopher remains suspended between the moment of beholding and recognition, then Adolph Menzel's drawing of 1887, *Skeleton of a Celtic Woman and Detail of a Statue in Salzburg Museum,* provides us with the point of view of the artist-recorder and the art historian (fig. 49).[18] In this suggestive drawing of objects in storage in Salzburg Museum, Menzel brings together two objects that would surely never be placed in such close proximity in any "rational" museum display.[19] Menzel had a habit of incessantly recording the world around him; he was especially interested in the sidelines of life—in the objects, details, and fragments that comprise the diurnal and the incidental. It is not known whether Menzel simply recorded the position of the skeleton and the antique bronze as he found them in the storage bin of the museum. What is certain is that he found the juxtaposition of these objects intriguing, per-



49. Adolph Menzel, *Skeleton of a Celtic Woman and Detail of a Statue in Salzburg Museum,* ca. 1887. Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz/Art Resource, NY.

haps precisely because of the ironic commentary they seem to make on the supposedly rational nature of museum display.

Given the customary conflation of woman and nature, it should come as no surprise that Menzel depicts a female skeleton. In this instance, nature has been more than tamed: Menzel's drawing presents not a Celtic woman so much as sheer, inanimate matter. Placed beside the very upright bronze, whose biological sex leaves no room for debate, the artist provides us with a provocative configuration. Menzel does not enact the drama of his own subjectivity (although it could be argued that we see its traces here). Instead, and akin to the art historian, the artist has found a suggestive juxtaposition and has delineated his chosen figures with a fine objectivity. Menzel, the artist-recorder, is not implicated in nature. In keeping with his Kantian counterpart, his viewpoint on his subject is transcendental, a point of view that offers to him a supposed objectivity.

Herein lies the performance of the subject in Kantian philosophy and in art history. If the drawing by Beckmann demonstrates how nature beckons, then the philosopher of Klinger's eponymous print has warded off the lure of nature with the transcendental point of view. In bridging

the divide through his own reason—and not troubling over the fact that what he discovers is merely his own reflection—Klinger's philosopher performs as an idealized subject. The works on paper by Beckmann, Klinger, and Menzel not only echo the trajectory of the idealized Kantian subject but also tell us about the history of art as a disciplinary practice. Like Klinger's philosopher, or a fortiori Menzel the artist-recorder, the art historian stands over and above the work of art. Avoiding the lure of the image, he employs his own brand of Odyssean cunning. Having renounced the fusion of subject and object that troubles the experience of fetishism, the rational subject of aesthetic judgment confronts the work of art with a certain detachment. In this way, the elevated status of the art object—what might be termed the idol in the history of art—is met by the cool gaze of the humanist, while the distance necessary for a truly aesthetic experience is structurally maintained.

The idealized Kantian subject, the philosopher of Klinger's print, the "objective" art historian—these are all constructions wherein the subject is at once established and vacated. Drained of its own nature, its own corporeality, the subject is accorded through reason a transcendental position on both "the starry heavens above me" and the artistic object. This has not always been the case, however. As Hans-Georg Gadamer reminds us in *The Relevance of the Beautiful,* "our recourse to ancient thought helps us to see that in art and the beautiful we encounter a significance that transcends all conceptual thought."[20] It was Kant who attempted to reverse the terms of this equation. His Copernican revolution in philosophy laid out the conditions of possibility of knowledge, moral action, and judgment for a subject conceived as transcendental to a world of objects.

The Kantian turn toward the rational subject did not merely establish and impoverish an idealized subject. In this process the art object was stripped of its magical qualities—it was overcome by reason—thus safely removing it from the realm of fetishism. Because of the interrelation between the work of art and the beholder, the act of reinvesting the work of art with its magical qualities, or what George Steiner has termed its "real presence," would be akin to investing the art historian with a body.[21] This embodiment would include a more richly varied "topography of the self," one offering more than mere reason.[22] Since how we conceive the presence of the body before the image affects the way we construct a text about the work of art, refashioning the subject, the art historian, would likewise enable us to reconceive objectivity.

After all, to borrow Lewis Hyde's evocation, "We are only alive to the degree that we can let ourselves be moved."[23] If the work of art, which has the essential capacity to move us, is denied this capacity in "scientific" modes of analysis and description in art history, then we have

robbed the art object—and ourselves—of its primary mode of address. In this sense, the polarity of objectivity and subjectivity presents a circuit of false alternatives in the history of art. Seeking the stamp of a scientific or systematic rigor, the discipline of art history has historically sought methodologies that turn on objectivity. Art criticism, on the other hand, has traditionally been the realm where subjectivity has been allowed to reside. I propose bringing these two strands of our practice together in a dialectical form of objectivity. In my conclusion, "Encountering the Image," I sought to demonstrate the way dialectical objectivity encompasses subject and object. Conceived through a dialectical mode of objectivity, our practice might proceed along the lines suggested by Evelyn Fox Keller, who describes a reinvigorated history of science as "a pursuit of knowledge that makes use of subjective experience . . . in the interests of a more effective objectivity."[24]

## The Subject in Nature and the Subject as Nature

I have argued that the performance of the Kantian subject, that movement from nature to reason, involves a certain overcoming of the subject as well as the domination of internal and external nature. Reason may incessantly push the subject beyond his current limits, and toward the moral law, but the idealized Kantian subject cannot help but succeed in his self-projection. For, in the philosopher's systematics, thought is self-contained: understanding and reason reside within the Kantian subject as a self-enclosed system set over against a world of objects. In the performance of the idealized Kantian subject, nature is therefore assimilated into a subjectivity that literally creates its own world. But what if nature were not so much a phenomenon assimilated into an idealized subjectivity, or dominated in mental or physical representations, as an unassimilable remainder? Though Kant denies nature a foothold in the constitution of an idealized subjectivity, he nevertheless indicates how nature and reason lie at the foundations of the subject. Keeping within the frame of German idealism—to be sure—Kant views reason rather than nature as the foundation for critical knowledge.

Yet just as assuredly as Kant secures the ascendant position of reason, and so the architectonic of his systematics, he sets up a paradox: Kant denies the body in the constitution of subjectivity but clings to the body of the subject as the site of reason, and so of freedom.[25] Recall the conclusion to the *Critique of Practical Reason,* where we find the philosopher's subject contemplating the overwhelming vastness of the starry heavens as he leaves his own nature behind, dividing himself from himself in or-

der to exercise self-preservation through the discovery of the moral law. This divided subject—the subject of reason—is nevertheless tied to the body it has renounced, for it is out of the body that subjectivity arises. Leaving the body behind, the idealized Kantian subject trades mortality for morality. Whereas the embodied being signals the inevitability of death, disembodiment allows for the transcendental vistas of reason. Dominating nature, the subject thus conquers his own fear of death, but he does so at the expense of a separation from himself that is never final, but only spectral.[26] In this sense, too, Klinger's *Philosopher* may be considered an emblem of the performance of an idealized subjectivity.

*The Philosopher* demonstrates that the purely transparent structure of self-consciousness, of recognizing oneself as oneself, actually involves a misrecognition: the lighted realm of freedom and the darker realm of necessity are, in fact, not congruent; they may be considered as such only at the expense of nature. It is nature, then, that lies at the limits of self-recognition. As the limit that cannot be grasped in reflection, nature figures as part of the pre-reflective subject, or the subject before subjectivity. For the pre-reflective subject, nature constitutes the ground that unites and separates.

We can follow this thread by returning to Klinger's print, *The Philosopher,* focusing this time on the viewpoint of the figure in the lighted realm at the left-hand edge of the image. Like his counterpart, the luminous philosopher on the left stares into the dim space in front of him. Yet whereas the lighted realm reflects only the searching male figure, the darkened, right-hand side of the print contains both the philosopher and the personification of nature. Surrendering to the illusion of Klinger's image, we could say that the philosopher in the lighted realm perceives more than his own reflection: he perceives the pre-reflective subject as his own identity, the identity he shed in the movement from nature to reason. From the standpoint of the figure on the left, then, the philosopher might be viewed not so much as reflecting himself as himself (A = A, and not B) as identifying himself in that which he both is and is not (A = A and B). In this model of identity rather than subjectivity, mind (A) resides along with nature (B) in a configuration of identity wherein—as the copula suggests—the subject is conceived as mind, on the one hand, and nature, on the other. By recognizing the nature effaced in an idealized model of subjectivity, the philosopher discovers the aspect that connects him to the cycle of nature and the fact of mortality. Nature thus becomes the determining ground, binding the philosopher to himself and to the external world in a relation of identity and difference that does not position the subject over against a world of objects so much as indicate their interrelation.[27]

While it can be argued that Klinger provides a model of identity in the viewpoint of the philosopher on the left-hand side of the print, he nevertheless accentuates the shedding of nature as a constituent element of subjectivity.[28] Displaying a standing male figure beside a recumbent female form, Klinger sets up a gendered relation that clearly indicates the ascendancy of the male and the role of reason for self-consciousness. Identity is consequently undercut as it is indicated, and, as in the other depictions of genius in Klinger's print cycle, an idealized subjectivity is favored. Yet, Klinger's *Philosopher* does not unravel when read from left to right, just as subjectivity does not unravel for Schopenhauer. Like Klinger's scene of representation, Schopenhauer's own philosophy is caught between two ways of conceiving the subject.

According to Schopenhauer, aesthetic experience offers a transition from the painful reign of the subject's own will to the Will of the world, a fundamental reality that exists beneath the veil of phenomenal appearance.[29] In order to apprehend the Will in aesthetic contemplation, the subject must actively "tear itself free from the service of the will," and so from "the principle of sufficient reason," to "lose [itself] entirely in [the] object." When subject and object are merged, "thus at the same time, the person who is involved in this perception is no longer an individual, for in such a perception the individual has lost himself; he is *pure,* will-less, painless, timeless subject of knowledge."[30] For Schopenhauer, aesthetic experience thus proceeds from active to passive modes, finally resting with the "pure subject [of a will-less knowing]." If art is understood as a representation of the Will, then the underlying Will never changes, but is conceived as the ground of truth the subject apprehends through aesthetic contemplation. As Cheryl Foster rightly remarks, "The respect for an *aesthetic* way of knowing, as an alternative to the more familiar scientific way of knowing, is one of the most potent but neglected lessons to be drawn from Schopenhauer's work."[31] Where an aesthetic way of knowing underlines the attraction between subject and object, a scientific way of knowing, which focuses on the differentiation between elements, sets the subject off from the world.

In Schopenhauer's philosophy aesthetic contemplation offers a means of identity with the underlying world of ideas and, with it, a glimpse of a greater unity of which the subject is also a part. Still, Nietzsche complained of Schopenhauer's "residually humanistic refusal to totally immerse himself in the flux,"[32] a condition whose end result is a philosophy that remains caught between the worlds it seeks so assiduously to bridge. Like the Kantian subject confronted by the "starry heavens above," Schopenhauer offers the "vastness of the world" only to accentuate the subject's "triumph over its world": "The vastness of the world, which

previously disturbed our peace of mind," he writes, "now rests within us; our dependence on it is now annulled by its dependence on us."[33] As in Klinger's print, the subject of Schopenhauer's philosophy might release himself to the Will of the world and yet, in self-consciousness, he reflects this domination of the external world. Once again, subjectivity ultimately rests with a transcendental rather than a corporeal subject, a subject, that is to say, who knows the world rather than one who is in the world.

The philosophies of Kant and Schopenhauer are intriguing for the ways they signal and deny embodiment. Schopenhauer's subject of aesthetic contemplation, the pure subject of a will-less knowing, is defined through a bodily will that becomes suspended in the space of the aesthetic experience, only to rise up again since the world "is dependent on us"—here Schopenhauer signals the perceiving subject. While Schopenhauer goes further than Kant in conceptualizing nature as the determining ground of truth, he nevertheless allows the subject to dominate the nature it seeks to feel and apprehend. In this way nature, which may initially overwhelm the subject, may never be the cause of the subject's undoing.

Another view of the subject and nature is found in the work of the contemporary video artist Bill Viola. In a manner akin to Schopenhauer's description of the aesthetic object as representation, Viola's video projects present different views of the same underlying substance.[34] But where Schopenhauer conceives of aesthetic representation and natural appearance as so many variations of the world of the Will, or of the Platonic Ideas, Viola finds the ground of truth in nature itself, a nature both internal and external. Inspired by the writings of the Christian mystics, Zen Buddhists, and other philosophers, Viola presents the subject as at once embodied and in flux, prey to interior and exterior forces that are beautiful, haunting, uncanny. It is these forces, and so nature itself, to which the subject surrenders in his work. In Viola's video art we view the subject in nature and the subject as nature.

Conceiving the subject and nature together, Viola views art as "a whole-body, physical experience" in time.[35] Temporality plays a leading role in his work, for it allows him to follow the development or unraveling of subjects across visual fields that correspond to both human time and timelessness. Vision is thus not solely equated with our point of view. Instead, vision leads to realms of "unseen images" that emanate from temporal and supra-temporal registers of existence, from the conscious and the unconscious memory.[36] As Ursula Frohne suggests, Bill Viola "is concerned . . . with an aesthetic encounter with the world in its most comprehensive, and also metaphysical sense. . . . The pictorial patterns of memory that Viola understands as equivalent to a supra-temporal, or de-

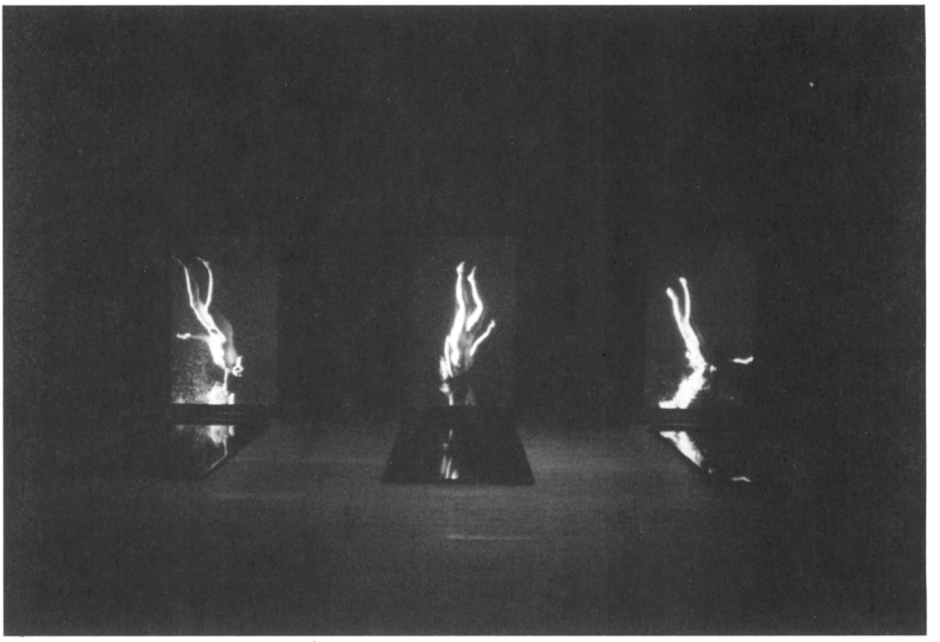
temporalized, level of existence that is, as it were, assumed into a sort of cosmic infinity, can hardly be understood without taking into account the perpetual resonance of metaphysical longing."[37]

The modern subject, cleaved from internal and external nature, responds with "metaphysical longing" for a perceived unity of existence now lost, for an imaginary unity with nature. Yet the subject is cleaved, and so it is constitutively unable to join permanently with nature, but only to long for this reunion. If, as Novalis claimed, "all philosophy is homesickness," then Viola's art is a gift from a homeland lost in modern society, a homeland conceived not as a golden age but as the phenomenon of nature itself. In this way, Viola's creations offer the possibility of a transitory reconciliation with internal and external nature. Here, we are not offered redemption but a medium through which we might remember what we have forgotten, what it is that we consequently yearn for through "metaphysical longing."

*Stations* of 1994 is an evocative case in point (fig. 50). In this large-scale installation the viewer is plunged into a darkened space and surrounded by five channels of video projected onto five translucent screens. On each screen a figure is shown suspended upside down in water, picked out from the surrounding darkness by a strong cross light. We hear the interior of this aquatic world through sound projection, as we watch the figures emerge, float adrift, and disappear from the screens with varying frequency, only to then plunge back into the water to repeat the approximately thirty-minute cycle of the installation. The projected figures—a boy, a young woman, a young man, a pregnant woman, and an old man—represent the stations of earthly life. Whereas the figures on the screens are shown upside down, they are reflected upright on the granite slabs positioned on the floor in front of each screen.

Unlike Klinger's *Philosopher,* Viola's *Stations* offers neither a single viewpoint nor a point of view that can be relayed back and forth along the axis of a single line. In place of a stationary viewpoint, we are offered a visual environment that invites the engagement of the eye, the body, and our movement in space. *Stations* confounds a transparent notion of reflection: while the bodies on the screen correspond—in reverse—to those fixed on the surfaces of the granite, on the polished stone surfaces we see ourselves and the reflection of a body that is not our own.[38] Reflection, seeing oneself as oneself, is here also seeing oneself as another. Like the philosopher on the left-hand side of Klinger's print, in *Stations* one perceives identity in that which one is and is not.

Rather than an overcoming of nature by the subject, *Stations* presents subjects suspended in nature and invites us to contemplate the implications of their immersion. Although chronological age and gender are in-



50. Bill Viola, *Stations*, 1994, video projection. Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe.

dicated, the subjects on the screens are equally unmoored from temporality. Viola asks us to suspend our knowledge of the technological origins of *Stations* and instead to contemplate this liminal space as simply posited rather than fabricated. When experienced as merely posited, *Stations* becomes a theater of technological illusion and metaphysics, an environment wherein the human subject's relation to temporality and mortality is the primary subject of artistic legerdemain. To quote Viola, in *Stations* an "initial surface appearance of eerie, serene beauty resides over a deeper disturbing aspect of muted violence and disorder, with the unrooted, isolated, free-floating bodies evoking an eternal state between dream and death."[39] *Stations* speaks of a nature that exists not as a world of objects tamed for a transcendental viewer so much as a realm that includes and exceeds a subject who is asked to ponder identity and difference, temporality and supra-temporality, life and death, as part of his or her own existence.

I have suggested that Viola's art does not invite a transcendental

point of view or an "objective" analysis so much as it beckons for bodily participation on the part of the beholder. In *Stations,* the subject is not established and vacated but reminded of corporeality. Earlier models of historical meaning, of which Ripa's *Historia* of 1760 might serve as the emblem (fig. 45), sought the royal road to objectivity—and so to truth—in the transcendence of the interpreter's historical position and, correspondingly, of the temporal distance separating historian and object of investigation. In Viola's art the viewer is likewise invited to bridge the separation of subject and object. Yet, here this bridging offers merely a means through which to interpret the work according to the viewer's standpoint. Because Viola's work turns on a reflexive model of meaning, it suggests that "understanding itself is not to be thought of so much as an action of subjectivity, but as the entering into an event of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated."[40] In this way—and importantly—neither subjectivity nor meaning are denied, nor are they conceived as transcendental or unitary. Instead, subjectivity and meaning are conceived through their interrelation, an interrelation that presupposes a real, historically bounded, corporeal subject.

Using the latest video and sound technology, Viola trains his sights, and ours, on a modern condition of metaphysical longing: the artist acknowledges the separation of subject and object, as he indicates the connection of the subject to the life cycle of nature. Nature, coursing through Viola's art as an unassimilable remainder, is, then, a fundamental and unfathomable phenomenon offered up to perception, rather than an object or concept to be dominated. Gadamer's perspective, which he termed philosophical hermeneutics, strikes a resonant chord with Viola's own work and writings. As Gadamer put it in an essay published in 1966: "Our task is to reconnect the objective world of technology, which the sciences place at our disposal and discretion, with those fundamental orders of our being that are neither arbitrary nor manipulable by us, but rather simply demand our respect."[41] Whereas the duty of the idealized Kantian subject is to transcend internal and external nature, Gadamer and Viola advocate the reemergence of the subject in nature.

Gadamer indicates why the task of the subject is also our own charge. Following Gadamer, we might render this task in parallel strokes: to cultivate rather than to dominate; to reunite reason with its remainders.[42] It follows that as the contours of subjectivity expand to encompass the unknowable within the individual, so might the unfathomable aspects of aesthetic objects retain their capacity to arrest us, even as we endeavor to transform chaos into cosmos. Responding to the passage from Paul Valéry that inaugurates this afterword, Benjamin writes: "According to

this view, the painting we look at reflects back at us that of which our eyes will never have their fill."[43] If the work of art has this effect, and I believe it does, then Warburg's remark about the night sky radiates out toward our relation to aesthetic images: depending on your point of view, depending on your desire for pure knowledge, the aesthetic phenomenon is either the blessing or the curse of humanity.

# Notes

## Introduction

1. Plato, *Theaetetus,* trans. M. J. Levett (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992), 67–78. For a commentary on Plato's dialogue see Myles Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1990).

2. More specifically, the "origins of the English word *theory* are found in three Greek words associated with vision—*theorein, theoros, theoria*—and the word for the divine, *theos*. . . . *Theorein* means to look at attentively, to behold, to contemplate, or to survey. . . . A *theoreos* was originally a spectator at festival theater performances, athletic contests, and other public events. . . . A *theoria* was an official delegation from one Greek polis to another. It served an important function in Greek civic life by attesting to the occurrence of an important event, first witnessing the event as it occurred, and later certifying that it had actually taken place." David Fisher, "History of Theory," in *The Encyclopedia of Aesthetics,* ed. Michael Kelly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4:388ff. On the relation between theory and vision see Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

3. Plato, *Theaetetus,* 43–44. For an alternative anecdote of Thales see Aristotle, *Politics* I 4, 1259a 6–19. On the history of the reception of the Thales anecdote and its transformation into metaphor, see the fascinating study by Hans Blumenberg, *Das Lachen der Thrakerin: Eine Urgeschichte der Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987), and more generally his earlier study *Der Prozess der theoretischen Neugierde* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1973), a reworking of the third section of *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age,* trans. Robert Wallace (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983). Also of interest is Hans Blumenberg, *Die Vollzähligkeit der Sterne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1997).

4. As Aristotle put it in his celebrated maxim: "In wonders is the beginning of philosophy." Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (983a), in *The Basic Works of Aristotle,* ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 14ff.; and Plato, *Theaetetus* (154d), 19. See also David Summers, *The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 37, 182–197; and Philip Fischer, "The Poetics of Wonder," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Views from the Outside; A Centennial Commemoration of Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968),* ed. Irving Lavin (Princeton: Institute for Advanced Study, 1995), 175–193.

5. Ernst Cassirer, *Substance and Function and Einstein's Theory of Relativity,* trans. William Curtis Swabey and Marie Collins Swabey (New York: Dover, 1953), 117. As Cassirer put it, "not only the hypothetical concepts, like the atom and the ether, but purely empirical concepts, like matter and motion, show that scientific investigation along with the 'given' elements of perception cannot do without the purely ideal *limiting concepts* not given in direct experience; along with the 'real,' scientific investigation must have the 'not-real'" (228).

6. Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man: In a Series of Letters,* ed. and trans. E. M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 183.

7. Arthur Miller, *Einstein, Picasso: Space, Time and the Beauty That Causes Havoc* (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

8. Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

9. For an illuminating gloss on Kandinsky's phrase see Kurt Forster, "Aby Warburg: His Study of Ritual and Art on Two Continents," *October* 77 (Summer 1996): 12–14.

10. The phrase "objects of knowledge" evokes the writings of Michel Foucault, who distinguishes *connaissance* from *savoir* in the following way: "By *connaissance* I mean the relation of the subject to the object and the formal rules that govern it. *Savoir* refers to the conditions that are necessary in a particular period for this or that type of object to be given to *connaissance* and for this or that enunciation to be formulated." Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language,* trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 15. In this book I explore connotations of *connaissance* and *savoir* through a study of how aesthetic objects become objects of knowledge, aesthetic judgment, and notions of systematicity.

11. Cited in Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion,* trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 305.

12. Max Dessoir, "Kunstgeschichte und Kunstsystematik," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 21 (1927): 142. Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this book are mine.

13. Erwin Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 15; originally published in *Meaning in the Humanities,* ed. T. M. Greene (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940), 89–118.

14. Hans Belting, *Art History after Modernism,* trans. Caroline Saltzwedel, Mitch Cohen, and Kenneth Northcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 26.

15. Heine's aphorism is cited in the illuminating essay by Wolfgang Ernst, "Signifikaten jenseits der Lettern: Archäologie, Museum und Archiv als Medien der Aufklärung," in *Nach der Aufklarung? Beiträge zum Diskurs der Kulturwissenschaften,* ed. Wolfgang Klein and Waltraud Naumann-Beyer (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 277–296.

16. Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms,* vol. 1, *Language* [1923], trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 76.

17. Cassirer and Warburg's admiration for Goethe existed as part of a cult of Goethe among the German-Jewish bourgeoisie. Cassirer, Warburg, Panofsky, and Walter Benjamin considered Goethe the touchstone of European humanism. What Goethe calls symbolic objects encompass a "certain totality." They "therefore lay claim to a certain unity and universality from the outside and the inside." See Goethe's letter to Schiller, August 16, 1797, in *Correspondence between Goethe and Schiller 1794–1805,* trans. Liselotte Dieckmann (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 208–210.

18. Georg Simmel, "Die Ruine," in *Philosophische Kultur: Gesammelte Essais* (Leipzig: W. Klinkhardt, 1911), 137–154.

19. Walter Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, in *Selected Writings / Walter Benjamin,* vol. 2, *1927–1934,* ed. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 517.

20. Walter Benjamin, K1,1, in his *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 388.

21. Colin Simpson, *Artful Partners: Bernard Berenson and Joseph Duveen* (New York: Macmillan, 1986).

22. Allan Megill, "Introduction: Four Senses of Objectivity," in *Rethinking Objectivity,* ed. Allan Megill (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 1–20.

## 1. Points of View in Panofsky's Early Theoretical Essays

1. Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 103. See also Annette Michelson, "Art and the Structuralist Perspective," in *On the Future of Art* (New York: Viking, 1970), 37–59.

2. On the "scientific revolution" in early German art history see Georg Dehio, *Kunst-*

*historische Aufsätze* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1914); Max Dessoir, "Kunstgeschichte und Kunstsystematik," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 21 (1927): 131–142; Heinrich Dilly, *Kunstgeschichte als Institution: Studien zur Geschichte einer Disziplin* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979); Lorenz Dittmann and Oskar Bätschmann, eds., *Kategorien und Methoden der deutschen Kunstgeschichte, 1900–1930* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner Verlag, 1985); Max Dvôrák, *Idealismus und Naturalismus in der gothischen Skulptur und Malerei* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1918); Max Eisler, "Die Sprache der Kunstwissenschaft," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 13 (1918–19): 309–316; *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1873–1893,* introduction and trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomu (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994); Jost Hermand, *Literaturwissenschaft und Kunstwissenschaft: Methodische Wechselbeziehungen seit 1900* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1965); Johann Jahn, ed., *Die Kunstwissenschaft der Gegenwart in Selbstdarstellungen* (Leipzig: F. Meiner, 1924); B. Krystal, *Wie ist Kunstgeschichte als Wissenschaft möglich?* (Halle: M. Niemaeyer, 1910); Udo Kultermann, *The History of Art History* (New York: Abaris Books, 1993); Michael Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry* [1901], trans. Rolf Winkes (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 1985); Julius von Schlosser, *Der Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1934); August Schmarsow, "Kunstwissenschaft und Kulturphilosophie mit gemeinsamen Grundbegriffe," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 13 (1918–19): 165–190, 225–258; Hans Tietze, *Methode der Kunstgeschichte* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann Verlag, 1913); Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art,* trans. M. D. Hottinger (New York: Dover, 1950); Christopher Wood, ed., *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s* (New York: Zone Books, 2003).

3. John Michael Krois, *Cassirer: Symbolic Forms and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 126. The interrelation of academic institutions with the formation of disciplines, scholarly paradigms, and methodological protocols lies beyond the scope of this chapter. On this see the trenchant critique of the university by Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

4. Erwin Panofsky, "Das Problem des Stils in der bildenden Kunst," 29. Panofsky's essay originally appeared in the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 10 (1915): 460–467. It is reprinted in *Erwin Panofsky, Aufsätze zu Grundfragen der Kunstwissenschaft,* ed. Hariolf Oberer and Egon Verheyen (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1964), 23–31; and more recently in *Deutschsprachige Aufsätze,* ed. Karen Michels and Martin Warnke (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), 2:1009–1018. I will cite the 1964 reprint. As Sander Gilman rightly states, "But the very act of perception is of course colored by our mental representations of the world." Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 28. The notion of a "worldview" is a onerous one: on the one hand, imagining a worldview enables the art historian to find a greater conceptual unity among the artifacts of a given period; on the other hand, as Ernst Gombrich and others have assiduously emphasized, the concept of a worldview slides rather easily into normative, often pernicious concepts of national and racial character. On this latter point, see Christopher S. Wood's introduction to *Vienna School Reader,* 9–81.

5. Panofsky's famous collection of essays, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), bears the German title *Sinn und Deutung in der bildenden Kunst* (Cologne: DuMont, 1975; trans. Wilhelm Höck). *Sinn* and *Deutung,* "sense and meaning," draw out the connotations of "meaning" that I believe Panofsky seeks to demonstrate in his essays and is therefore a more useful description of his project than is the single English word. In the following chapter I intend "sense and meaning" to refer to processes of making what is seen into an object in and for thought (processes, then, of representing and knowing), and of discovering the meaning or value of objects within a system of knowledge.

6. "Science has no higher criterion than truth; and can have no other than unity and completeness in the systematic construction of experience." Ernst Cassirer, *Substance and Function and Einstein's Theory of Relativity,* trans. William Curtis Swabey and Marie Collins Swabey (New York: Dover Publications, 1953), 187. Brought together in one English volume, Cassirer's studies originally appeared as *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff: Untersuchungen über die Grundfragen der Erkenntnisskritik* [1910] and *Zur Einstein'schen Relativitätstheorie: Erkenntnistheoretische Betrachtungen* [1920]. A new German edition of Cassirer's

1910 study, edited by Reinold Schmücker, appeared in 2000 (Hamburg: Meiner Verlag). Cassirer's understanding of the quest for "truth" in scientific experiments has been replaced by the consideration of experimental results as social constructions. From a full palette of varied responses see Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language,* trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1972); Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge* (London: Verso, 1975); Thomas Kuhn, "Objectivity, Value Judgment and Theory Choice," in *The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 320–329; Steven Shapin, "History of Science and Its Sociological Reconstructions," *History of Science* 20 (1982): 157–211; Bruno Latour and Peter Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979); Karin Knorr-Cetina, *Die Fabrikation von Erkenntniss: Zur Anthropologie der Naturwissenschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984); and Erhard Scheibe, "Missverstandene Naturwissenschaft," in *Wissenschaft und Aufklärung,* ed. Rainer Enskat, Montagsvorträge der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 1997), 9–29.

7. As Wilhelm Dilthey put it somewhat earlier, in his inaugural lecture at the University of Basel in 1867, "The task of our generation is clearly before us: following Kant's critical path, but in cooperation with researchers in other areas, we must found an empirical science of the human mind. It is necessary to know the laws which rule social, intellectual, and moral phenomena. This knowledge of laws is the source of all the power of man, even where mental phenomena are concerned." Cited in Michael Ermarth, *Wilhelm Dilthey: The Critique of Historical Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 74. On neo-Kantianism see Klaus Christian Köhnke, *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism: German Academic Philosophy between Idealism and Positivism* [1986], trans. R. J. Hollingdate (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Thomas Willey, *Back to Kant: The Revival of Kantianism in German Social and Historical Thought, 1860–1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1978); and Fritz Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community, 1890–1933* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 305–366.

8. Donald Phillip Verene, "The Development of Cassirer's Philosophy," cited in Thora Ilin Bayer, *Cassirer's Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms: A Philosophical Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 10.

9. For an overview see Stephan Nachtsheim, *Kunstphilosophie und empirische Kunstforschung 1870–1920* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1984). Nachtsheim does not study Panofsky's early theoretical essays. For a discussion of these early essays see Silvia Ferretti, *Cassirer, Panofsky, Warburg: Symbol, Art, and History* [1984], trans. Richard Pierce (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 177–236; and Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the Foundations of Art History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 57–68, 79–96. In *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 152–156, Margaret Iverson discusses Panofsky's 1920 paper, "The Concept of the *Kunstwollen.*"

10. Edgar Wind, "Theory of Art versus Aesthetics," *Philosophical Review* 34, no. 4 (July 1925): 351, 354. In contrast to aesthetics, Wind writes, "fortunately we have an art history which *is* a science; which looks at pictures not from the point of view of what impressions they make on human souls, but what artistic problems they undertake to solve and how they solve them" (355). Wind's "Theory of Art versus Aesthetics" is an English-language synopsis of his 1925 dissertation, "Zur Systematik der künstlerischen Probleme," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 18 (1925): 438–486, which he wrote under Panofsky at the University of Hamburg. It should be noted that Panofsky drew heavily on Wind's work, especially in his conception of artistic problems, aesthetic re-creation, and the relation between art history and art theory. Especially helpful critical analyses of Wind's writings include the essays in Horst Bredekamp, Bernard Buschendorf, Freia Hartung, and John Michael Krois, eds., *Edgar Wind: Kunsthistoriker und Philosoph* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998); and the introduction by Brigitte Falkenburg and the afterword by Bernhard Buschendorf to Edgar Wind's habilitation, *Experiment und Metaphysik: Zur Auflösung der kosmologischen Antinomen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001).

11. Considered in this way, the aesthetic point of view shares features with curiosity, a specific attitude toward aesthetic phenomena that took hold in Europe around 1550. Stephen Bann points out that for "the scientific temper of a scholar like Bacon or Descartes, the habit of 'curiosity' was offensive because it attached itself almost obsessively to the in-

dividual object, rather than using classes of objects to arrive at general conclusions which would have the force of law. Curiosity in sum was inimical to inductive reason" (Bann, "Shrines, Curiosities, and the Rhetoric of Display," in *Visual Display: Culture beyond Appearances*, ed. Lynne Cooke and Peter Wollen [Seattle: Bay, 1995], 24). In its attempt to break the spell of the aesthetic point of view in favor of a systematic approach toward aesthetic phenomena, scientific art history reiterates this shift from curiosity to science.

12. Panofsky writes, for example,

> A work of art is not always created exclusively for the purpose of being enjoyed, or, to use a more scholarly expression, of being experienced aesthetically. . . . But a work of art always *has* aesthetic significance (not to be confused with aesthetic value): whether or not it serves some practical purpose, and whether it is good or bad, it demands to be experienced aesthetically. . . . Only he who simply and wholly abandons himself to the object of his perception will experience it aesthetically. . . . A man-made object, however, either demands or does not demand to be so experienced, for it has what the scholastics call an "intention."

Erwin Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, 10–11.

13. A useful compendium in English of German psychological aesthetics is *Empathy, Form, and Space*. On "hedonistic aesthetics" and "art-historical anhedonia" see Randolf Starn, "Pleasure in the Visual Arts," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Views from the Outside; A Centennial Commemoration of Erwin Panofsky (1892–1968)*, ed. Irving Lavin (Princeton: Institute for Advanced Study, 1995), 151–162; and Arthur Danto, *The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

14. Erwin Panofsky, "Der Begriff des Kunstwollens," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 14 (1920): 321–339; translated by Kenneth J. Northcott and Joel Snyder as "The Concept of Artistic Volition," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 1 (Autumn 1981): 19. I will cite the English translation of this essay, modifying it as indicated.

15. Panofsky, "History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," 15, 10, 24.

16. Richard M. Ludwig, ed., *Dr. Panofsky and Mr. Tarkington: An Exchange of Letters, 1938–1946* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 114.

17. Originally published as "Die Perspektive als 'symbolische Form,'" *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 1924/25 (Leipzig/Berlin, 1927), 258–330; translated by Christopher S. Wood as *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (New York: Zone Books, 1991).

18. See Martin Warnke's brief remarks on this curious state of affairs in "Panofsky: Die Hamburger Vorlesungen," in *Erwin Panofsky: Beiträge des Symposions Hamburg 1992*, ed. Bruno Reudenbach (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), 58; see also Panofsky, "History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," 19ff., on the necessity of "aesthetic re-creation."

19. "*Scientia* and knowledge, denoting a mental possession rather than a mental process, can be identified with the natural sciences; *eruditio* and learning, denoting a process rather than a possession, with the humanities. The ideal aim of science would seem to be something like mastery, that of the humanities something like wisdom." Panofsky, "History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," 25.

20. Ibid., 15. See also Martin Kemp, "Relativity not Relativism: Some Thoughts on the Histories of Science and Art, Having Reread Panofsky," in Lavin, *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, 225–236.

21. An objective viewpoint should not be confused with objectivity per se. With the "objective viewpoint" I intend to mark out a distinction between an object existing in the world and *Anschauung*, the mental image or representation of an object. For a brief discussion of *Anschauung*, see my introduction. This distinction is nicely articulated in the German language: whereas *das Objekt*, literally speaking, denotes an object in the world, *das Gegenstand*, philosophically speaking, implies the taking up of an object by the mind in such a way that it stands out as a re-presentation, or object for analysis. In his 1910 study *Substance and Function*, Cassirer discusses the role of representation for knowledge, noting how the "*impression* of the object and the *object itself* are separated from each other; instead of identity, the relation of representation appears. No matter how complete our knowledge may be in itself, it never offers us the objects themselves, but only *signs* of them and their

reciprocal relations. . . . To know a content means to make it an object by raising it out of the mere status of givenness and granting it a certain logical constancy and necessity" (303).

22. On the formation and activation of objects, categories, and systems of knowledge, see Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966); translated as *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973); Harriett Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid and Other Figments of the Classifying Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997); and most recently, Geoffrey C. Bowker and Susan Leigh Star, *Sorting Things Out: Classification and Its Consequences* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999).

23. Cassirer, *Substance and Function,* 128.

24. Ibid., 122.

25. Ibid., 286. Citing the results of Helmholtz's recent experiments in physiological optics, Cassirer notes how this "ordering by a concept means . . . that the various elements do not lie alongside of each other like the parts of an aggregate, but that we estimate each of them according to its *systematic* significance" (289).

26. This negotiation of two points of view is addressed anew in Edgar Wind's concept of "embodiment." See Wind, *Experiment und Metaphysik,* translated by Cyril Edwards as *Experiment and Metaphysics: Towards a Resolution of the Cosmological Antinomies* (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre, 2001).

27. Cassirer, *Substance and Function,* 281.

28. The relation of objectivity to art history is treated briefly in chapter 2 and more extensively in my conclusion. For our purposes here see David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970); Allan Megill, "Introduction: Four Senses of Objectivity," in *Rethinking Objectivity,* ed. Allan Megill (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994), 1–20; Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

29. For instance, when Hans Reichenbach "on a certain occasion, asked Professor Einstein how he found his theory of relativity, he answered that he found it because he was so strongly convinced of the harmony of the universe." Hans Reichenbach, "The Philosophical Significance of the Theory of Relativity," in *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist,* ed. Paul Arthur Schlipp (Evanston, Ill.: Library of Living Philosophers, 1949), 292. In terms of the discipline of history, see R. G. Collingwood, "Epilegomena" to *The Idea of History* [1946] (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), 205–334.

30. Edgar Wind nicely articulates the mutual relation between the scientist and the philosopher in this regard: "every philosophical statement in the field of methodology has, therefore, its scientific aspect; it must be considered as an anticipation which needs to be tested. Every scientific statement in the field of methodology has also its philosophical aspect; it must be considered as a postulate which needs to be interpreted." Wind, review of *Kant und Einstein,* by Alfred C. Elsbach, *Journal of Philosophy* 24, no. 3 (February 3, 1927): 71.

31. Cassirer's 1910 study of the function of scientific concepts provides numerous examples, drawn from the fields of mathematics, chemistry, and physics, of the necessity of this shift in viewpoint for the building up of the scientific disciplines. To cite just one example, Cassirer explains how knowledge of the magnetic field proceeded from its identification with sensuous properties to the understanding of it as a concept to, finally, the use of "the magnetic field" as a symbol of the mathematico-physical relations and connections suggested by the concept. In this transformation from seeing to representing to knowing, and, correspondingly, from the empirical to the objective to the transcendental point of view, the magnetic field itself remained constant while knowledge of it expanded accordingly.

32. Albert Einstein, "Zur Elektrodynamik bewegter Körper," *Annalen der Physik* 17 (1905): 891–921. I have found the following sources of especial interest: Michael Friedman, *Foundations of Space-Time Theories: Relativistic Physics and Philosophy of Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Reichenbach, "Philosophical Significance of the Theory of Relativity"; and Gerald Holton, *Einstein, History, and Other Passions: The Rebellion against Science at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1996). On the

impact of Einstein's theories on Panofsky and Wind's writing in the 1930s, see Kemp, "Relativity not Relativism."

33. "An absolutely lawless and unordered something of perceptions is a thought, that cannot even be realized as a methodological fiction; for the mere possibility of consciousness includes at least the conceptual anticipation of a possible order, even though the details may not be made out." Cassirer, *Substance and Function,* 297.

34. "Das Höchste wäre: zu begreifen, dass alles Faktische schon Theorie ist." Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen,* ed. M. Hecker, Schriften der Goethe-Gesellschaft 21 (Weimar, 1907), no. 575, 125. As Cassirer put it in 1942: "We can no longer relegate the particular sciences to the extraction and collection of 'facts,' while we reserve the study of 'principles' for philosophy. This separation between the 'factual' and the 'theoretical' proves to be thoroughly artificial; it dissects and cuts to pieces the organism of knowledge. There are no 'naked' facts—no facts other than those that can be ascertained by reference to, and with the aid of, determinate conceptual premises. Every observation of fact is possible only within a particular context of judgments, which for its part is based on certain logical conditions." Ernst Cassirer, *The Logic of the Cultural Sciences: Five Studies,* trans. S. G. Lofts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 16–17.

35. Erwin Panofsky, *Dürers Kunsttheorie, vornehmlich in ihrem Verhältnis zur Kunsttheorie der Italiener* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1915), 199. Michael Podro uses Goethe's maxim profitably to discuss how Panofsky "attempted to construct . . . an authoritative viewpoint, one which would show how the various factors within a work of art cohered and the work took on the distinctive meaning it had *qua* work of art." Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art,* 179. I am more concerned with demonstrating how Panofsky negotiated shifts in points of view in his early theoretical essays, and especially with the manner in which, in his conceptual system, seeing is bound up with knowledge or "an authoritative viewpoint." From the field of history see also the important essay by Hayden Whyte, "The Fictions of Factual Representation," in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985; originally published in 1976), 121–134.

36. Panofsky, "Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie: Ein Beitrag zu der Erörterung über die Möglichkeit 'kunstwissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe,'" *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 18 (1925): 156. This essay is reprinted in Michels and Warnke, *Deutschsprachige Aufsätze,* 2:1035–1063. In a similar vein he writes in "History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline" that "archaeological research is blind and empty without aesthetic re-creation, and aesthetic re-creation is irrational and often misguided without archaeological research" (19).

37. Panofsky, "Concept of Artistic Volition," 18. Panofsky continues: "This demand is, as we have said, both a curse and a blessing. It is a blessing because it keeps the academic study of art in a constant state of tension, consistently challenging methodological consideration and, above all, reminding us that the work of art is a work of art and not just an arbitrary historical artifact. It is a curse because it introduces an uncertainty and fragmentation into scholarship which is hard to tolerate and which either cannot be reconciled with serious scholarship or which appear to offend the notion that the individual work of art has a unique value" (19).

38. Panofsky asks the reader to note that his text was in the hands of the editors at the beginning of July 1915, which is to say before Wölfflin's book was published.

39. Panofsky, "Das Problem des Stils," 23. Wölfflin's lecture was published in the *Sitzungsberichte der Königlischen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 31 (1912): 572ff.; it was available as an offprint. Wölfflin makes this point explicitly in his 1915 *Principles of Art History:* "Yet an analysis with quality and expression as its objects by no means exhausts the facts. There is a third factor—and here we arrive at the crux of this enquiry—the mode of representation as such. Every artist finds certain visual possibilities before him, to which he is bound. Not everything is possible at all times. Vision itself has a history, and the revelation of these visual strata must be regarded as the primary task of art history" (11).

40. Panofsky, "Das Problem des Stils," 23. On Wölfflin's art history see Marshall Brown, "The Classic Is the Baroque: On the Principle of Wölfflin's Art History," *Critical Inquiry* 9, no. 2 (December 1982): 379–404; Joan Hart, "Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics," *Art Journal* 42, no. 2 (Winter 1982): 292–300; Michael Ann Holly,

"Wölfflin and the Imagining of the Baroque," in *Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 91–111; Christine McCorkel, "Sense and Sensibility: An Epistemological Approach to the Philosophy of Art History," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 34, no. 1 (Fall 1975): 35–50; Podro, *Critical Historians of Art*, 98–151; Frederic Schwartz, "Cathedrals and Shoes: Concepts of Style in Wölfflin and Adorno," *New German Critique* 76 (1999): 3–48; and Martin Warnke, "On Heinrich Wölfflin," *Representations*, no. 27 (Summer 1989): 172–187.

41. On "form" see David Summers, "'Form,' Nineteenth-Century Metaphysics, and the Problem of Art Historical Description," *Critical Inquiry* 15 (Winter 1989): 372–393.

42. Panofsky, "Das Problem des Stils," 25. In answering these questions Panofsky explores the "methodological-philosophical meaning" of Wölfflin's concepts. As he informs the reader, we "will not ask whether it is justified to conceive of the development from the Cinquecento to the Seicento as a development from the linear to the painterly. . . . Instead, we will ask whether it is justified to characterize the development from linear to painterly . . . as merely formal" (24). Panofsky indicates at several points in this essay that Wölfflin himself did not conceive of style as strictly formal. While Wölfflin chose to highlight the purely formal root of style as the basic principle of his system, he indicated the role of expressive content in the creation of style. See Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History*, 17, 229–230; notes 4 and 6 of Panofsky's 1915 essay in the *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*; as well as Brown, "Classic Is the Baroque"; and Hart, "Reinterpreting Wölfflin."

43. "Either 'seeing' has nothing to do with the expressive tendencies of art because it only gives, but does not form, the objects of the creative process—yet then on these very grounds it cannot have any influence on style; if 'seeing' influences style, however, then it is a more than an optical activity." Panofsky, "Das Problem des Stils," 26.

44. Erwin Panofsky, "Heinrich Wölfflin: Zu seinem 60; Geburtstage am 21. Juni 1924," in Michels and Warnke, *Erwin Panofsky*, 2:1107; originally published in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt*, June 21, 1924.

45. "Formal and imitative elements (in contrast to Wölfflin's doctrine of the 'double root of style') need not be reduced to separable and, for their part, irreducible concepts. They must be understood as different manifestations of a common fundamental tendency, the comprehension of which is precisely the task of the real 'fundamentals' of art history." Panofsky, "Das Problem des Stils," 26. Hence, in "art history there is no question of 'being able to,' only a question of will" (22).

46. This sense of the artist's choice or will is captured in Panofsky's term "artistic intention." On this point see also Panofsky's 1921 essay "The History of the Theory of Human Proportions as a Reflection of the History of Styles," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, 55–107; and his essay of 1930, "The First Page of Giorgio Vasari's 'Libro': A Study on the Gothic Style in the Judgment of the Italian Renaissance with an Excursus on Two Façade Designs by Domenico Beccafumi," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, 169–225.

47. Panofsky uses the terms *Ausdruckswille* and *Gestaltungs-Wille* to describe the a priori will to form and expression. As he puts it, the difference between the style of a single work of art and the art of a period is "a difference of extent and degree, not of essence." Panofsky, "Das Problem des Stils," 26.

48. Ibid., 28. Panofsky echoes an observation that Cassirer makes in his 1910 study: "Two entirely different complexes of tone-sensations can give us the same melody while, on the other hand, two complexes of elements having the same content can lead to entirely different melodies, in so far as these elements are different from each other in relative sequence." Cassirer, *Substance and Function*, 332. Turning from music to painting (29), Panofsky describes how even if Holbein were to return one hundred years after his death to paint his portrait of Georg Ginzer once again, he would never be able to create a work with the same expression since the same content cannot be expressed in exactly the same way at different times.

49. Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings* (New York: New Directions, 1964), 36–44. On this condition see also Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); and Nelson Goodman, "Art and Authenticity," in *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1976), 99–123.

50. Chapter 2 examines how the Kantian sublime negotiates the "unknowable" object of perception.

51. See for instance Stephen Melville, "'Theory,' Discipline, and Institution," in *Art History, Aesthetics, Visual Studies*, ed. Michael Ann Holly and Keith Moxey (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2002), 203–214; and Podro, *Critical Historians of Art*, 117–151.

52. On the logic and techniques of the comparative method see Michel de Certeau, "Writing vs. Time: History and Anthropology in the works of Lafitau," *Yale French Studies*, no. 59 (1980): 37–64; and two essays by Natalie Melas: "Versions of Incommensurability," *World Literature Today* 69, no. 2 (1995): 275–301; and "Humanity/Humanities: Decolonization and the Poetics of Relation," *Topoi* 18, no. 1 (1999): 13–29.

53. On dual slide projection in art history see Heinrich Dilly, "Lichtbildprojektion—Prothese der Kunstbetrachtung," in *Kunstwissenschaft und Kunstvermittlung*, ed. Irene Below (Giessen: Anabas-Verlag, 1975), 153–172; Heinrich Dilly, "Die Bildwerfer: 121 Jahre kunstwissenschaftliche Dia-Projektion," *Rundbrief Fotographie*, n.s. 5 (1995): 39–44; Robert Nelson, "The Slide Lecture, or The Work of Art *History* in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 3 (Spring 2000): 414–434; Donald Preziosi, "Seeing through Art History," in *Knowledges: Historical and Critical Studies in Disciplinarity*, ed. Ellen Messer-Davidow et al. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 215–231; Ingeborg Reichle, "Medienbrüche," *kritische berichte* 30, no. 1 (2002): 40–56; and Silke Wenk, "Zeigen und Schweigen: Der kunsthistorische Diskurs und die Diaprojektion," in *Konfigurationen: Zwischen Kunst und Medien*, ed. Sigrid Schade et al. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1999), 292–305. Beyond the scope of this chapter lies Panofsky's own very interesting remarks on the art historian's use of originals and reproductions of works of art.

54. Panofsky, "Das Problem des Stils," 29.

55. Ibid., 31 n. 5.

56. Ibid.

57. Carlo Ginzburg, "From Aby Warburg to E. H. Gombrich: A Problem of Method," in *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, trans. John Tadeschi and Anne C. Tadeschi (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1986), 17–59, 170–194; and Ginzburg, "Clues: Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes," in *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce*, ed. Umberto Eco and Thomas A. Sebeok (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 81–118.

58. Panofsky, "Das Problem des Stils," 29.

59. "He has not only created the concept of artistic volition, he has also discovered categories suited to the understanding of the concept," such as his "concepts of 'optical' and . . . 'haptic,'" which "aim at revealing a meaning immanent in artistic phenomena." Panofsky, "Concept of Artistic Volition," 28.

60. For a fuller discussion of Riegl's concept of the *Kunstwollen*, see chapter 4.

61. Panofsky, "Concept of Artistic Volition," 26.

62. Ibid., 20. If artistic volition "does not designate either a psychological reality or an abstract general complex, artistic volition cannot be anything except (and not for us, but objectively) what 'lies' in the artistic phenomenon as its ultimate meaning" (26).

63. Ibid., 24. Panofsky cites Theodor Lipps, *Ästhetik: Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst*, 2 vols. (1903–6), as an example of "modern aesthetics."

64. Ibid., 28. "Far from displacing purely historical work, the method which adopts the history of meaning [*sinngeschichtlich*] is the only one competent to complement it, more competent, in any case, than psychologizing, which appears to deepen the historical picture but which in fact only confuses art and artist, subject and object, reality and idea" (30–31).

65. Ibid., 27; translation modified.

66. Ibid., 27–28; translation modified.

67. Ibid., 26. Five years later, Panofsky defines the artistic phenomenon as follows: " Here . . . the characterization 'artistic phenomenon' or 'artistic appearance' is understood as every art-historical [*kunstwissenschaftliche*] object that, from the point of view of style criticism, can be seen as a unity—whether this unity is restricted to the merely regional (*Volksstil*), epochal (*Zeitstil*), or personal (*Individualstil*), or whether it is represented in a single work of art." Panofsky, "Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie," 129.

68. Panofsky, "Concept of Artistic Volition," 31.

69. "And now we are at the point where the effort to establish the perception of the immanent meaning needs the help of 'documents,' primarily to secure the phenomenal understanding of the given artistic phenomenon" (ibid., 32).

70. Returning to Panofsky's earlier use of Kantian terminology we would therefore say that while we cannot, perhaps, have judgments of experience of artistic phenomena, we can have judgments of perception of them.

71. "Riegl could still not completely recognize that he had justified a transcendental philosophy of art which left behind the purely genetic method which prevailed at that time." Panofsky, "Concept of Artistic Volition," 30 n. 18.

72. As Margaret Iverson rightly states, "Panofsky's use of Riegl's concept of the *Kunstwollen* to secure an historically unconditioned, fixed point of departure for art-historical enquiry was against the spirit of Riegl's work. There is no Archimedean point, and the *Kunstwollen,* far from proposing one, was intended as its undoing." Iverson, *Alois Riegl,* 7; see also 13–14. I explore Riegl's concept of the *Kunstwollen* in chapter 4.

73. Panofsky, "Concept of Artistic Volition," 28.

74. In this essay Panofsky borrows heavily from the dissertation of his student Edgar Wind, which was completed in July 1922. See Wind, "Zur Systematik der künstlerischen Probleme," 438–486. Panofsky's 1925 essay responds to Alfred Dorner's critique of his 1920 essay on Riegl, published in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 16 (1922): 216ff. In response to Dorner's criticism, Panofsky here aims to demonstrate the "theoretical essence, as well as the practical methodological meaning, of the fundamental concepts of systematic art history in order to articulate more precisely the relation between art history and art theory." Panofsky, "Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie," 130.

On July 29, 1925, Panofsky's professorship at the University of Hamburg was confirmed. On Panofsky's professorship in Hamburg see Aby Warburg's interesting letter to Otto Lauffer of the Museum for the History of Hamburg, dated November 11, 1925, which provides a detailed history of Panofsky's appointment. *Erwin Panofsky: Korrespondenz 1910 bis 1968; Eine kommentierte Auswahl in fünf Bänden,* ed. Dieter Wuttke, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2001), 181–184. See also Claudia Naber, "'Heuernte bei Gewitter': Aby Warburg 1924–1929," in *"Ekstatische Nymphe . . . trauernder Flussgott": Porträt eines Gelehrten,* ed. Robert Galitz and Brita Reimers (Hamburg: Dölling and Galitz, 1995), 104–129.

75. Panofsky, "Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie," 139 n. 1.

76. Ibid., 132.

77. Though a quite different note is struck in the 1925 essay, this presentation of different but complementary points of view is not unlike that of the well-known tables of his later essay on "Iconography and Iconology." See Panofsky, "Iconography and Iconology: An Introduction to the Study of Renaissance Art," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts,* 26–54. This essay was first published in 1939.

78. Panofsky, "Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie," 130.

79. Ibid. 130–131.

80. Although Panofsky considers ontological, or natural, time and historical time as part of the same categorical system, he therefore draws a distinction between them. See further his essay "Zum Problem der historischen Zeit," an appendix to "Über die Reihenfolge der vier Meister von Reims," *Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft,* 1927, 55–82.

81. Here I am drawing on the ontological distinction between "absolute" and "relative" since I believe Panofsky is alluding to this in his essay.

82. Panfosky goes on to make analogies between the a priori concepts of fullness and time, on the one hand, and form and space, on the other, thereby knitting more tightly to one another the elements in the system of values he presents in the table.

83. Panofsky, "Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie," 131, 142.

84. Ibid., 133, 139.

85. Ibid., 142, 152, 147.

86. Erwin Panofsky, "Probleme der Kunstgeschichte," *Idea: Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunsthalle* 7 (1988): 9.

87. Edgar Wind, "Contemporary German Philosophy," *Journal of Philosophy* 22, no. 18 (1925): 491.

88. On the hermeneutic circle of interpretation see Wind, *Experiment and Metaphysics;* Wind, "Some Points of Contact between History and Natural Science" [1936], in *Philosophy and History: Essays presented to Ernst Cassirer,* ed. Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), 255–264; and Panofsky, "History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline." Contemporaneous essays from the field of history include Hajo Holborn, "His-

tory and the Humanities," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 9, no. 1 (January 1948): 65–69; and Leo Spitzer, "Linguistics and Literary History," *Linguistics and Literary History: Essays in Stylistics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 1–39.

89. The literature on the concept of style in art history is fairly vast. See for example, in order of appearance, Alois Riegl, *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament* [1893], ed. David Castriota, trans. Evelyn Kain (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art* (New York: Zone Books, 1989; originally published in 1934); Meyer Schapiro, "Style," in *Anthropology Today*, ed. A. L. Kroeber (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), 287–312; George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962); James Ackerman, "Style," in *Art and Archaeology*, ed. James Ackerman and Rhys Carpenter (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 164–186; Lorenz Dittmann, *Stil, Symbol, Struktur: Studien zu Katagorien der Kunstgeschichte* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1967); Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972); Nelson Goodman, "The Status of Style," *Critical Inquiry* 1, no. 4 (June 1975): 799–811; Ernst Gombrich, "The Psychology of Styles," in *The Sense of Order: A Study of the Psychology of Decorative Art* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 194–216; Dick Hebdige, *Subculture, the Meaning of Style* (London: Methuen, 1979); Berel Lang and Leonard Meyer, eds., *The Concept of Style* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979); Willibald Sauerländer, "From Stilus to Style: Reflections on the Fate of a Notion," *Art History* 6, no. 3 (September 1983): 253–270; Friedrich Möbius and Helga Sciurie, eds., *Stil und Epoche* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 1989); Esther Pasztory, "Identity and Difference: The Uses and Meanings of Ethnic Styles," in *Cultural Differentiation and Cultural Identity in the Visual Arts*, ed. S. J. Barner and W. S. Melion (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Hanover, N.H.: Distributed by the University of New England, 1989), 15–38; Margaret Conkey and Christine Hastorf, *The Uses of Style in Archaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Peter Por and Sándor Rádnoti, eds., *Stilephoce, Theorie und Diskussion: eine interdiszipinäre Anthologie vòn Winckelmann bis heute* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1990); Whitney Davis, "Style and History in Art History," in *Replications: Archaeology, Art History, Psychoanalysis* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 171–198; Carlo Ginzburg, "Style as Inclusion, Style as Exclusion," in *Picturing Science, Producing Art*, ed. Caroline Jones and Peter Galison (London: Routledge, 1998), 27–54; C. J. Van Eck, J. Macallister, and R. Van de Vall, eds., *The Question of Style in Philosophy and the Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Irene J. Winter, "The Affective Properties of Styles: An Inquiry into Analytical Processes and the Inscription of Meaning in Art History," in Jones and Galison, *Picturing Science, Producing Art*, 55–77; James Elkins, "Style," in *Grove Dictionary of Art* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 1996), 876–883; and Jonathan Gilmore, *The Life of a Style: Beginnings and Endings in the Narrative History of Style* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000).

90. Panofsky, "Probleme der Kunstgeschichte," 9.

91. Panofsky writes:

> From the end of the eighteenth century, there has arisen a dichotomy—inevitable, to be sure, but nevertheless a little saddening—between a *scientific* interpretation of the world that looks for *laws and principles* regardless of *meanings;* and a *humanistic* interpretation of the world that gropes for *meanings* while no longer being able to believe in *laws* and *principles.* This was not so when both the sciences and the humanities came into being and walked hand in hand for a few glorious centuries. . . . Needless to say, we cannot go back. We cannot revert to the acceptance of either classical tradition or Christian dogma, however much revered, as something that guarantees meaning to the law of nature, and, at the same time, guarantees the force of a law to the meaning of history. (Ludwig, *Dr. Panofsky and Mr. Tarkington,* 114–116)

92. Panofsky's iconographic method resonated persuasively with the current emphasis on "objective" method in American art history, more than his more speculative work ever could have. Yet, as I have attempted to demonstrate, this American disciplinary climate should not be taken as the sole reason for his abandonment of theory, as it has been gener-

ally. On the fate of German art history and German art historians "transplanted" into the United States after 1933, see two important recent studies: Ulrike Wendland, *Biographisches Handbuch deutschsprachiger Kunsthistoriker im Exil: Leben und Werk der unter dem Nationalsozialismus verfolgten und vertriebenen Wissenschaftler,* 2 vols. (Munich: Saur, 1998); and Karen Michels, *Transplantierte Kunstwissenschaft: Deutschsprachige Kunstgeschichte im amerikanischen Exile,* Studien der Warburg Haus, vol. 2 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1999).

93. Erwin Panofsky, "Zum Problem der Beschreibung und Inhaltsbedeutung von Werken der bildenden Kunst," *Logos* 21 (1932): 103–119; reprinted in Michels and Warnke, *Erwin Panofsky,* 2:1064–1077. I will cite this reprint.

94. Panofsky, "Iconography and Iconology," 39.

95. Panofsky, "Concept of Artistic Volition," 33.

96. To be sure, the ordering of objects under generic concepts such as "Gothic" or "Renaissance" provides a new law of relation and with it a greater unity of artistic phenomena than does the concept of serial relation. Though he fell prey to the lure of the generic concept, Panofsky was nevertheless aware of some of the shortcomings of the use of these powerful concepts. As he remarked in his 1920 essay, "The Concept of Artistic Volition," "'Gothic' man or the 'primitive' from whose alleged existence we wish to explain a particular artistic product is in truth the hypostatized impression which has been culled from the works of art themselves" (23). Like psychological or historically genetic volition, generic concepts do not provide an Archimedean point outside the field of investigation; hence, although generic concepts offer a gain in terms of relation, they remain an unsuitable means with which to discover the fundamental principles of systematic art history.

97. As Cassirer puts it in *The Logic of the Cultural Sciences,* "For once we are convinced that the logical concept is the necessary and sufficient condition for the knowledge of the essence of things, then everything else, which is specifically different and which does not meet this standard of clarity and distinctness, ends up being only an unreal appearance" (29).

98. On "Renaissance" as a normative generic concept see Ernst Gombrich, "Norm and Form: The Stylistic Categories of Art History and Their Origins in Renaissance Ideals" [1961], in *Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance* (London: Phaidon, 1971), 81–98, 149; and Svetlana Alpers, "Style Is What You Make It: The Visual Arts Once Again," in *The Concept of Style,* ed. Berel Lang (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 137–162.

99. Edgar Wind, "Aby Warburg's Concept of *Kunstwissenschaft,*" in *The Eloquence of Symbols,* ed. Jaynie Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 22.

100. Edward Harrison, *Masks of the Universe: Changing Ideas on the Nature of the Cosmos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 118–119.

101. Panofsky, "Zum Problem der Beschreibung und Inhaltsbedeutung," 1072; Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics,* trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 138. On Panofsky's quotation of Heidegger and its relation to "the scheme of art historical interpretation that persisted through the later versions of his essay" see David Summers, "Meaning in the Visual Arts as a Humanistic Discipline," in Lavin, *Meaning in the Visual Arts,* 9–24. I agree with Summers that Panofsky "did not think it desirable to eliminate 'violence' since we must always—or should always—approach the past on our own personal and historical ground" (11).

102. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics,* 138.

103. See, for instance, Aby Warburg, "Sandro Botticelli" [1898], "Francesco Sassetti's Last Injunction to his Sons" [1907], and "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara" [1912], in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity,* trans. David Britt (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999). Warburg's approach to the study of aesthetic phenomena is explored in chapter 3.

104. Erwin Panofsky, "The Neoplatonic Movement and Michelangelo," *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939), 171–230ff. See also Kurt Forster, "Critical History of Art, or Transfiguration of Values?" *New Literary History* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1972): 459–470; and Holly, *Panofsky,* 172–174.

105. Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1968). Originally delivered as the Wimmer lecture for 1948.

106. David Summers puts it eloquently: "It is through history that we understand our own historicity and thus confront so many human possibilities. This is the historicist version of the ideal of the examined life. If it is because of our histories that we think and act

as we do in the present, it is also partly because of our knowledge of history that we may act *differently* in the present." Summers, "Meaning in the Visual Arts," 20.

107. See "Bilderflut oder Interpretationsebbe?" special issue, *kritische berichte* 26, no. 2 (1998). If the "flood tide" of images is the visual condition of contemporary times, then what Eric Hobsbawm has termed a "permanent present," which is to say a present lacking an organic relation to the past, may be its corresponding historical condition. See Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994).

108. On the vicissitudes of the concept of the "masterpiece" from the early nineteenth century to the present, see Hans Belting, *The Invisible Masterpiece* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Applying Stephen Greenblatt's convenient formulation, the designation of a work of art as a masterpiece would entail "that kind of impulse that moves us away from resonance and toward wonder." It is useful to consider the implications of this impulse in relation to the Museum of Modern Art in New York, for example. As Greenblatt suggests, MOMA works to efface the historical and ethnographic thickness of "resonance" in favor of a poetics of "wonder," both as a mode of viewing and a strategy of display: "For MOMA is one of the great contemporary places not for hearing of intertwining voices, not for historical memory, not for ethnographic thickness, but for intense, indeed enchanting looking. Looking may be called enchanted when the act of attention draws a circle around itself from which everything but the object is excluded, when intensity of regard blocks out all circumambient images, stills all murmuring voices. To be sure, the viewer may have purchased a catalogue, read an inscription on the wall, or switched on a cassette player, but in the moment of wonder all of this apparatus seems mere static." Stephen Greenblatt, "Resonance and Wonder," in *The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 49.

109. Panofsky, "Über das Verhältnis der Kunstgeschichte zur Kunsttheorie," 156–157.

110. Panofsky, "Probleme der Kunstgeschichte," 7. Here Panofsky implies an investigation of aesthetic objects, broadly conceived. In this sense he leans more toward a *Bildwissenschaft*, a science of the image, rather than a more narrowly conceived history of art. Horst Bredekamp rightly argues for *Bildwissenschaft* as a neglected tradition of art history, especially in the United States. See his essay "A Neglected Tradition? Art History as Bildwissenschaft," in *The Art Historian: National Traditions and Institutional Practices*, ed. Michael Zimmermann, Clark Studies in the Visual Arts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 147–159. In *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2001), Hans Belting offers an anthropological approach to the study of the image or likeness. See also *Quel Corps? Eine Frage der Repräsentation*, ed. Hans Belting, Deitmar Kamper, and Martin Schulz (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2002).

111. A fundamental inquiry might begin with the definition and function of the image. See, for instance, Gottfried Boehm, ed., *Was ist ein Bild?* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1994); Matthias Bruhn, ed., *Darstellung und Deutung: Abbilder der Kunstgeschichte* (Weimar: Verlag und Datenbank für Geisteswissenschaft, 2000); Dieter Kamper and Hans Belting, eds., *Der Zweite Blick: Bildgeschichte und Bildreflexion* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1998); and Horst Bredekamp, "Einbildungen," *kritische berichte* 28, no. 1 (2000): 31–37.

## 2. The Dialectics of Decay

1. Erwin Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline," in *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1. In a note, Panofsky cites E. A. C. Wasianski, *Immanuel Kant in seinen letzten Lebensjahren* (*Über Immanuel Kant*, 1804, vol. 3), reprinted in Immanuel Kant, *Sein Leben in Darstellungen von Zeitgenossen* (Berlin: Deutsche Bibliothek, 1912), 298. On eighteenth-century German connotations of "Humanitas" see Edna Purdie, "Some Renderings of *Humanitas* in German in the Eighteenth Century," in *Fritz Sazl: 1890–1948; A Volume of Memorial Essays from his friends in England*, ed. D. J. Gordon (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1957), 339–358.

2. Clement Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," in *Postmodern Perspectives: Issues in Contemporary Art*, ed. Howard Risatti (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990), 12. Greenberg's essay was originally broadcast over radio in 1960 by the Voice of America; after a bit of retouching it was then published in *Art and Literature* 4 (Spring 1963).

3. Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," 13. On Greenberg's particular use of Kant, see

also Paul Crowther, "Greenberg's Kant and the Problem of Modernist Painting," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 25, no. 4 (1985): 317–325.

4. In a postscript Greenberg seeks to separate himself from those who would wager that "he subscribes to, believes in, the things that he adumbrates." "The quotation marks around *pure* and *purity* should have been enough to show that," he claims (19). Be that as it may, Greenberg's subsequent championing of "modernist painting" make it difficult to countenance a complete separation of his own opinion from the rhetoric of his essay.

5. For this point of view see Mark Cheetham, *Kant, Art, and Art History: Moments of Discipline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

6. In this chapter I cite from Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment* [1790], trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Macmillan, 1951). Where indicated, I have modified Bernard's translation. As a historical note, it should be mentioned that Alexander Baumgarten (1714–62) was actually the first to use the term "aesthetics" in his unfinished *Aesthetica* of the 1750s. The uniqueness of the aesthetic was therefore established when Kant began his third *Critique.*

7. While I find it highly unsatisfactory to refer to a male Kantian subject, this is how Kant characterizes the subject. For consistency, I will follow Kant's designation, though I will criticize this and other aspects of Kantian subjectivity. Kant's philosophy has received justified feminist critique. See Sarah Kofman, "The Economy of Respect: Kant and Respect for Women," *Social Research* 49, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 383–404; Jane Kneller, "Discipline and Silence: Women and Imagination in Kant's Theory of Taste," in *Aesthetics in Feminist Perspective,* ed. Hilde Hein and Carolyn Korsmeyer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993); Robin May Schott, *Cognition and Eros: A Critique of the Kantian Paradigm* (Boston: Beacon, 1988); Robin May Schott, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Immanuel Kant* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997); and more generally Karen Green, *The Woman of Reason: Feminism, Humanism and Political Thought* (Oxford: Polity, 1995). More recently, Michael Mack's study *German Idealism and the Jew: The Inner Anti-Semitism of Philosophy and German Jewish Responses* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) demonstrates the connections between anti-Semitism and German idealist philosophy, noting the ways Jews were defined by Kant as irrational or "oriental."

8. Richard L. Velkley, "Introduction: Unity of Reason as Aporetic Ideal," in *The Unity of Reason: Essays on Kant's Philosophy,* by Dieter Henrich, trans. Jeffrey Edwards et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 3. In the passage cited Velkley quotes from Dieter Henrich, *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World: Studies in Kant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 85–89.

9. On this passage see Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View" [1784], and "Conjectural Beginning of Human History" [1786], in *On History,* ed. and trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 11–26, 53–68. It should be noted that the latter essay is a meditation on Genesis 2–6.

10. Lewis White Beck makes this point in his introduction to Kant, *On History,* xxv. For Kant's use of the phrase, see Kant, *On History,* 21, 65.

11. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics Which Will Be Able to Come Forth as Science* [1783], trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Liberal Arts, 1950), 115. Kant's statement is a diagnosis of his own culture, yet his words are directed more toward the faculty of philosophy than the larger field of society, since what he actually announces here is "the period of the downfall of all dogmatic metaphysics" (115–116). Kant's vision of vanity and decay is thus presented only to be circumscribed and ultimately rectified, for the decline of metaphysics was to be reversed through his own critical method.

12. Immanuel Kant, *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 10, ed. Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902), 208. Cited in Susan Neiman, *The Unity of Reason: Rereading Kant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 50. This passage is from the first introduction to the *Critique of Judgment* and does not appear in the English translation.

13. Kant writes (*Critique of Judgment,* 21–22) that we need to assume such transcendental laws or principles; otherwise we would be left with "no guiding thread" by which to understand the world or our place in it. Kant's use of the transcendental laws separates his philosophy from the skepticism of David Hume, just as his use of the critical method distinguishes his labor from that of dogmatic metaphysics. Kant's first *Critique* negotiates a middle path between skepticism and dogmatism through an examination of the conditions of possibility of reason itself. By finding the "eternal laws" of reason, Kant sought to rescue reason from both skepticism and dogmatism, or what Frederick Beiser terms "rational skep-

ticism or an irrational fideism." For an examination of the eighteenth-century philosophical context as it relates to Kant's critical work, as well as of subsequent criticism of Kant's claims for reason, see Frederick Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).

14. Neiman, *Unity of Reason,* 48.

15. Ibid., 50. Neiman contends that "far from undermining traditional belief in the significance of reason, Kant deepens and transforms it" (4).

16. Beiser, *Fate of Reason,* aptly describes what is at stake in such a definition of reason: "Reason was thought to be an autonomous faculty in the sense that it was self-governing, establishing and following its own rules, independent of political interests, cultural traditions, or subconscious desires. If, on the contrary, reason were subject to political, cultural, or subconscious influences, then it would have no guarantee that its conclusions were universal and necessary; they might then turn out to be disguised expressions of political, cultural, or subconscious interests" (8). In the *Critique of Judgment,* Kant makes a claim for an uncorrupted and autonomous reason, writing that his "examination of the faculty of taste, as the aesthetic judgment, is not here planned in reference to the formation or the culture of taste . . . but merely in a transcendental point of view" (6). In spite of his claims for the autonomy of reason, and thus for a transcendental viewpoint on the faculty of taste, Kant's conception of reason is nevertheless based on an interest: namely, his interest in a certain idealized notion of the subject, one guided by the ideas of pure morality and ethical community. It should be mentioned that late eighteenth-century critics of the autonomy of Kantian reason, such as J. G. Hamann, J. G. Herder, and F. H. Jacobi, believed that reason could not be separated from either society and history or desire and instinct.

17. On this point, see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1978), 303.

18. Kant begins the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason,* "Human reason has the peculiar fate [*das besondere Schicksal*] in a species of its knowledge [*in einer Gattung ihrer Erkenntnisse*]; it is burdened with questions that it cannot dismiss—for they are assigned to it by the nature of reason itself—but which it also cannot answer, for they overstep the power of human reason altogether" (A viii). Cited in Peter D. Fenves, *A Peculiar Fate: Metaphysics and World-History in Kant* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

19. Neiman, *Unity of Reason,* 92.

20. Kant's idea of a "moral image of the world" was shaped to a large extent by his reading of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau believed that without a moral image of the world to guide the thoughts and actions of humanity, human beings would fall prey to skepticism, or waver in despair. Kant translates Rousseau's theory into a regulative idea of reason. On the Kantian moral image of the world see Dieter Henrich, *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World,* especially 3–28; and Susan Meld Shell, *The Rights of Reason: A Study of Kant's Philosophy and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 20–32.

21. Neiman, *Unity of Reason,* 203. On the problem of irrationality in relation to the development of Kantian rationality compare Alfred Baeumler, *Das Irrationalitätsproblem in der Ästhetik und Logik des 18: Jahrhunderts bis zur Kritik der Urteilskraft* ([1923] Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981; and Hartmut Böhme and Gernot Böhme, *Das Andere der Vernunft: Zur Entwicklung von Rationalitätsstrukturen am Beispiel Kants* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1983).

22. Furthermore, when we consider how the history of reason constitutes an antinomy in Kant's own system, more light is shed on the absence of ruins from the philosopher's third *Critique.* What Yirmiahu Yovel (*Kant and the Philosophy of History* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980], 21ff.) has termed the "unbridgeable dualism" in Kantian philosophy between "empirical history as a form of experience" on the one hand and "rational history as a non-temporal processuality" on the other hand means that "no mediation between reason and empirical history is conceivable" in Kantian systematics. Because of the antinomy between these two principles, Kant cannot explain the relation of a nonempirical history of reason to empirical history (21). Consequently, "for Kant empirical reality is a challenge and a difficulty vis-à-vis the history of reason" (24). When we note this aporia between a nontemporal history of reason and a temporal, empirical history, and remember how the Kantian subject is much more a "subject of morality" than one of mortality, we may better conjecture Kant's disregard of decay.

23. Immanuel Kant, *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* [1755], quoted

in Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought* [1918], trans. James Haden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 56.

24. Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought,* 56–57. This compulsive quest continued in Germany through the course of the following century, when even psychology, the latest inquiry into the life of the mind, was believed capable of producing results as rigorously scientific as those of the natural sciences. On this trend see Hermann Lübbe, "Die Einheit von Naturgeschichte und Kulturgeschichte: Bemerkung zum Geschichtsbegriff," *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur,* no. 10 (1981): 3–19; Rüdiger vom Bruch, Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, and Gangolf Hübner, eds., *Kultur und Kulturwissenschaften um 1900: Krise der Moderne und Glaube an die Wissenschaft* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, 1989); and more generally Krzysztof Michalski, ed., *Der Mensch in den modernen Wissenschaften: Castelgandolfo-Gespräche 1983* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1985).

25. My thinking in this section has been inspired by the following sources: Theodore E. D. Baun and John A. McCarthy, eds., *Disrupted Patterns: On Chaos and Order in the Enlightenment* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000); James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Viking, 1987); Katherine Hayles, *Chaos Bound: Orderly Disorder in Contemporary Literature and Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Gregor Morfill and Herbert Scheingraber, *Chaos ist überall . . . und es funktioniert: Eine neue Weltsicht* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1991); Ilya Prigogine, *Order out of Chaos: Man's New Dialogue with Nature* (New York: Bantam, 1984); and Gert Scobel, "Chaos, Selbstorganisation und das Erhabene," in *Das Erhabene: Zwischen Grenzerfahrung und Grössenwahn,* ed. Christine Pries (Weinheim: VCH, 1989), 277–294. On the interrelation of chaos and cosmos see also chapter 1.

26. Furthermore, a conflation is often made between "transcendental" and "transcendent." As Karl Ameriks rightly remarks "these terms are more like antonyms than synonyms, since for Kant 'transcendental' considerations concern what is needed inside our experience, whereas what is 'transcendent' is wholly outside our experience." Karl Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy: Problems in the Appropriation of the Critical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 10.

27. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* trans. Lewis White Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill, 1956), 161–162.

28. Of course, discoveries in physics such as quantum theory now enable scientists to conceive of the infinity of the cosmos as an object of experience. Recent philosophical accounts of the impact of these discoveries on Kant's claim for infinity as an idea of reason (rather than as an object of experience), as well as related antinomies in the "Transcendental Dialectic" of the *Critique of Pure Reason,* include Brigitte Falkenburg, "Kants zweite Antinomie und die Physik," *Kant-Studien* 86 (1995): 4–25; and Peter Mittelstaedt and Ingeborg Strohmeyer, "Die kosmological Antinomien in der Kritik der reinen Vernunft und die moderne physikalische Kosmologie," *Kant-Studien* 81, no. 2 (1990): 145–169.

29. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* [1958] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

30. As Roland Beiner has remarked, "It is of course no coincidence that Kant introduces his philosophy with the famous reference to Copernicus, for it is the need to come to terms with the sense of cosmological dislocation, displacement from the center, that Copernicus's revolution instilled that at least in part elicited Kant's philosophical reflection in the first place." Roland Beiner, "Kant, the Sublime, and Nature," in *Kant and Political Philosophy: The Contemporary Legacy,* ed. Ronald Beiner and William James Booth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 283. Kant wrote of his own "Copernican revolution" in the 1787 preface to the second edition of *Critique of Pure Reason.* Whereas metaphysics had earlier posited that our knowledge must conform to objects (that objects exist a priori), Kant supposed that objects of experience must conform to our knowledge (that is, that we have knowledge of objects a priori). Kant's turn toward the subject—and thus toward subjectivity—changed the course of metaphysics started by Descartes. In addition to the sense of "cosmological dislocation" set in train by the Copernican revolution, the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 proved a turning point in Enlightenment debates on the cosmos. See Voltaire's "Poem on the Lisbon Disaster; Or an Examination of the Axiom, 'All is Well,'" in Voltaire, *Toleration and Other Essays,* trans. Joseph McCabe (New York: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1912), 255–263; as well as Kant's responses to the event in *Immanuel Kants Werke,* vol. 1, ed. Ernst Cassirer (Berlin: Bruno Cassirer Verlag, 1912), 427–484.

31. Walter Benjamin's critique of Kantian experience is explored briefly in chapter 4.

32. On this point see Immanuel Kant, "What Does It Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?" [1788], in *Religion within the Bounds of Mere Reason and Other Writings,* trans. Allen Wood and George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 3–14.

33. Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* 32–33.

34. Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy,* 13. Precisely because the Kantian subject is defined as spatiotemporal and transcendental, I agree with Ameriks, who sees Kant as "holding to a relatively modest system, culminating in a doctrine of autonomy that does not entirely resolve the difficulty of grounding an absolute claim to freedom" (23). See also Dieter Henrich, "On the Unity of Subjectivity," trans. Guenther Zoeller, in Henrich, *Unity of Reason,* ed. Velkley, 33. As Ameriks notes, in "focusing on 'experience' (*Erfahrung*) in the specific sense of putatively warranted empirical *judgment,* Kant made a decisive methodological break with all philosophies that insisted on beginning with simple ideas or impressions. Unlike impressions, judgments are not atomic entities that merely exist or fail to exist; they are already structured cognitive wholes, with essential semantic and normative features. In their paradigmatic form in Kant's texts, they are originally oriented toward external objects, as in the 'judgment of experience,' 'bodies are heavy'" (Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy,* 58). Ameriks's view of Kantian experience owes much to Gerold Prauss, *Erscheinung bei Kant: Ein Problem der Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971). See also Helmut Holzhey, *Kants Erfahrungsbegriff: Quellengeschichtliche und bedeutungsanalytische Untersuchungen* (Basel: Schwabe, 1970).

35. On this point see Kant's preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

36. First introduction to the *Critique of Judgment,* translated by Michael Friedman in his essay "Causal Laws and the Foundations of Natural Science," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kant,* ed. Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 187. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant notes, "Just as understanding unifies the manifold in the object by means of concepts, so reason unifies the manifold of concepts by means of ideas" (A644/B672).

37. Thomas E. Wartenberg, "Reason and the Practice of Science," in Guyer, *Cambridge Companion to Kant,* 233. "These three princples—of genera, specification, and affinity—collectively amount to Kant's delineation of the systematic structure to which our knowledge of nature aspires" (241). In chapter 1 I examined "the delineation of the systematic structure" of art history proposed in Panofsky's early theoretical essays.

38. Kant, preface to the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (A viii); and Wartenberg, "Reason and the Practice of Science." On the etymological and philosophical associations of architectonic and architecture see Daniel Payot, *La philosophie et l'architecture: sur quelques determinations philosophiques de l'idée d'architecture* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, n.d.), 54–60.

39. Wartenberg, "Reason and the Practice of Science," 248. Consequently, "infinity should be understood as a task rather than as a given entity" (239).

40. See for instance Michel Baridon, "Ruins as a Mental Construct," *Journal of Garden History* 5, no. 1 (January–March 1985): 84–96; Elizabeth Wanning Harries, *The Unfinished Manner: Essays on the Fragment in the later Eighteenth Century* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994); John Dixon Hunt, "Picturesque Mirrors and Ruins of the Past," in *Gardens and the Picturesque: Studies in Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 171–191; Rose Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* (New York: Walker, 1953); Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Modalities of Fragmentation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); Barbara Maria Stafford, "'Illiterate Monuments': The Ruin as Dialect or Broken Classic," *Age of Johnson* 1 (1987): 1–34; Friedrich Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments (1798–1800),* trans. Peter Firchow (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Paul Zucker, "Ruins—an Aesthetic Hybrid," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (Winter 1961): 119–130.

41. Anita Büttner, "Korkmodelle von Antonio Chichi: Entstehung und Nachfolge," *Kunst in Hessen und am Mittelrhein* 9 (1969): 3–35. Very little is currently known about Chichi or his workshop. Aside from the museum catalogues of his works, there is scant literature on him.

42. *Heroismus und Idylle: Formen der Landschaft um 1800,* exh. cat., Wallraf-Richartz-Museum (Cologne: Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, 1984), especially the essay by Ekkehard Mai,

"Kunsttheorie und Landschaftsmalerei: Von der Theorie der Kunst zur Ästhetik des Naturgefühls," 41–52.

43. These include the prints by Guiseppe Vasi and Piranesi. Vasi taught Piranesi the art of etching after that artist arrived in Rome from Venice in 1740. Piranesi's hundreds of prints of Roman architecture old and new proved exceedingly popular, and even created a specialized market for specifically Roman antiquity. As Thomas J. McCormick writes, "The classical past became so well known through Piranesi's works that tourists flocked to Rome throughout the second half of the 18th century and 19th centuries but were often disappointed when they saw the original monuments, which lacked the evocative quality, overpowering scale, and dramatic power of his prints." Thomas J. McCormick, *Piranesi and the New Vision of Classical Antiquity in the Eighteenth Century,* exh. cat. (Norton, Mass.: Watson Gallery, Wheaton College, 1991), 6.

44. While this work by Pannini, its pendant of the same year, *Vedute of Modern Rome,* and *The Gallery of Cardinal Silvio Valenti Gonzga,* a painting of a decade earlier, feature only male collectors, dilettantes, and admirers of art, his paintings of church interiors and his architectural *capricci* include figures of women as both protagonists and spectators. This discrepancy serves to underscore the historical fact that dilettante societies were exclusively male. As illustrated in the *Gallery of Views of Roman Antiquity,* women, denied the "freedom" of the male subject of aesthetic judgment, become merely the passive objects of male pleasure.

45. Identified with the Greek Artemis, the cult of Diana spread from Greece to Marseilles, and from there to Rome. The goddess enjoyed a widespread following in Italy. Since the end of the fifteenth century, Artemis was known as a symbol of nature. See Wolfgang Kemp, "Natura: Ikonographische Studien zur Geschichte und Verbreitung einer Allegorie" (Ph.D. diss., Eberhard-Karls-University, Tübingen, 1973); Guy MacLean Rogers, *The Sacred Identity of Ephesos: Foundation Myths of a Roman City* (New York: Routledge, 1991); and R. E. Witt, *Isis in the Graeco-Roman World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971).

46. In his dissertation Harten focuses mainly on the writings of Hegel, demonstrating how the philosopher employed the figure of the goddess (using Proclus rather than Plutarch's version of the inscription) to explain how the "truth" may be known when the veil is lifted in the course of history. Hegel, in other words, used the figure of the goddess to support his own theory of the unfolding of spirit through history. Stuart Harten, "Raising the Veil of History: Orientalism, Classicism and the Birth of Western Civilization in Hegel's Berlin Lecture Courses of the 1820s" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1994).

47. Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* 160 n. 44. Incidentally, Walter Benjamin equates the veiled goddess with his definition of truth in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* [1928], trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1994), 36.

48. Humboldt's letter to Goethe is cited in Pierre Hadot, "Zur Idee der Naturgeheimnisse: Beim Betrachten des Widmungsblattes in den Humboldtschen, *Ideen zur einer Geographie der Pflanzen,*" *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur,* no. 8 (1982): 3.

49. It should be mentioned that although Goethe studied and theorized the origins of the primal plant, in some of his poetry he satirized contemporary attempts to lay bare the secrets of nature.

50. A further discussion of anxiety and emasculation as it relates to the goddess may be found in Harten, "Raising the Veil of History," chap. 1.

51. Immanuel Kant, *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* [1764], trans. John Goldthwait (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 78.

52. Ibid., 82.

53. Ibid., 61–62. Kant's use of the sublime as the more noble of the pair of aesthetic categories is carried forward, and more deeply articulated, in his subsequent *Critique of Judgment.* The literary style and tone of Kant's *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime* bear the clear influence of Rousseau, particularly the latter's *Emile,* which it is known that Kant read at this time. Kant would quickly abandon this style for the rigidly systematic presentation of the critiques. In the *Observations* Kant employs Edmund Burke's categories of the beautiful and the sublime in the service of national character. The "beautiful" surface virtues of the French are contrasted in his text to the "sublime" feelings of the Germans. The "sublime" national character of the Germans fits well with a definition of German subjectivity characterized predominately through *Innerlichkeit* (inwardness or interiority). De-

fined in this manner, the German character is separated favorably from what was deemed at the time a French superficial civility. The popular book of 1813 by Madame de Stael, *De l'Allemagne,* considerably reinforced and propagated for her French audience the characterization of a German subject defined through inwardness.

54. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Elective Affinities* [1809], trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1971), 32.

55. Cited in Herbert von Einem, "Der 'Wanderer auf dem Obelisk': Zu Wilhelm Tischbeins 'Goethe in der Campagna,'" in *Kunst als Bedeutungsträger: Gedenkschrift für Günter Bandmann,* ed. Werner Busch, Reiner Haussherr, and Eduard Trier (Berlin: Mann, 1978), 306–307. "The Wanderer on the Obelisk" is how Goethe referred to his portrait. See also Christian Beutler, *J. H. W. Tischbein: Goethe in der Campagna* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1962); and John Moffitt, "The Poet and the Painter: J. H. W. Tischbein's 'Perfect Portrait' of Goethe in the Campagna (1786–87)," *Art Bulletin* 65, no. 3 (September 1983): 440–455.

56. An interesting treatment of Goethe's "passionate love affair with ancient remains" is Peter Leisching, "Goethe und das Entstehen des Denkmalpflegegedankens," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 25 (1971): 129–138.

57. The terms age value and historical value come from the 1903 essay by Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Origin," trans. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, *Oppositions* 25 (1982): 20–51. I examine Riegl's essay in chapter 4. In the *Observations* Kant does not mention ruins directly, though he does write of the sublimity of antique architecture: "A long duration is sublime. If it is of time past, then it is noble. . . . A building of the remotest antiquity is venerable" (49–50). Kant's description accords more with a sense of historical value than of age value; correspondingly, it aligns more with the response to ancient monuments captured in Tischbein's portrait of Goethe than with Eduard's response in the novella.

58. On this point see L. A. Willoughby, "The Image of the 'Wanderer' and the 'Hut' in Goethe's Poetry," *Études Germaniques* 6, nos. 3–4 (July–December 1951): 207–219.

59. Goethe described "Tyche" as "that element of perpetual mutation which rotates along with us and within ourselves" (ein Wandelndes, das mit und um uns wandelt). Cited in William S. Heckscher, *Goethe and Weimar: An Address at the University of New Hampshire* (Durham: University of New Hampshire, 1962), 8.

60. Peter-Klaus Schuster, "Grundbegriffe der Bildersprache?" in *Kunst um 1800 und die Folgen: Werner Hofmann zu Ehren,* ed. Christian Beutler, Peter-Klaus Schuster, and Martin Warnke (Munich: Prestel, 1988), 425–446. The pairing of the cube and the sphere, with the attendant symbolism of steady virtue and restless desire, also finds its echo in another realm of the history of art. The art historian and founder of the Warburg Institute, Aby Warburg, put forth a theory of symbolic forms that recognized within them an inherent tension. Warburg believed that the tension—and constant drift—between the poles of rationality and so-called primitive instincts and desires he witnessed in symbolic forms were none other than the registration of the forces of rationality and irrationality forever at play within the subject itself. I study Warburg's theory of symbolic forms in chapter 3.

61. Goethe to Chancellor von Müller, April 29, 1818. Cited in Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought,* 271. Kant defines morality in terms of the categorical imperative ("Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law") and the highest good, a combination of happiness and virtue. Kant's philosophy thus marks a turn away from eudaemonism, a popular moral theory of his day.

62. Thus I agree with Neiman, who points out that while for Kant "human virtue is a matter of struggle, . . . the very recognition of the moral law as the supreme norm implies, for Kant, the existence of a motive for following its dictates. . . . Because we are under obligation to the moral law, we must make whatever judgments are required to orient us in fulfilling it." Neiman, *Unity of Reason,* 136, 154.

63. Ernst Cassirer, *Rousseau, Kant, Goethe: Two Essays* [1945], trans. James Gutmann, Paul Oskar Kristeller, and John Herman Randall Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 94.

64. On the beautiful as a symbol of morality, see Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* sec. 59; and Ted Cohen, "Why Beauty Is a Symbol of Morality," in *Essays in Kant's Aesthetics,* ed. Ted Cohen and Paul Guyer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 221–236.

65. Charles Taylor writes of Kantian moral theory: "The motive which enables us to

live according to the law is the sense of respect (*Achtung*) that we experience before the moral law itself, once we understand it as emanating from the rational will. Our recognition that rational agency stands infinitely above the rest of the universe, because it alone has dignity, brings with it an awe which empowers us morally. In Kant's theory rational agency is the constitutive good." Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 94. For a rich discussion of the identity of the modern subject, and of the necessity of a moral orientation for self-definition, see esp. 53–107.

66. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 282.

67. Kant, "Conjectural Beginning of Human History," in Kant, *On History*, 62–63.

68. As Kant (*Critique of Judgment*, 58) writes: "That taste is always barbaric which needs a mixture of *charms* and *emotions* in order that there may be satisfaction, and still more so if it make these the measure of its assent." The use of the transcendental method in the realm of aesthetics separates Kant's *Critique of Judgment* from the popular *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* of 1757 by Edmund Burke, which Kant knew through Lessing's 1773 translation. As J. H. Bernard notes (translator's introduction to *Critique of Judgment*, xviii), though Kant "quotes with approval" from Burke's treatise, he "is careful to remark that it is as psychology, not as philosophy, that Burke's work has value." See Kant's comments on Burke's treatise in Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, sec. 29. See also Paul Crowther, *The Kantian Sublime: From Morality to Art* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 7–37.

69. While Kant notes the importance of the free play of the imagination in the judgment of taste, this is actually a free play under the laws of the understanding (see Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, sec. 22). In the play of the imagination and understanding that generates the mental representation (*Darstellung*) on which the aesthetic judgment is based, the imagination should ideally be given as free a reign as possible. Yet, as Kant revealingly remarks, this should only occur "under the condition . . . that the understanding is to suffer no shock thereby." Thus, he continues, "all stiff regularity (such as approximates to mathematical regularity) has something in it repugnant to taste. . . . On the other hand, nature, which there is prodigal in its variety even to luxuriance, that is subjected to no constraint of artificial rules, can supply constant food for taste" (79–80). Kant's preference for nature over objects of human art is also found in his analytic of the sublime. Just as the understanding is not to suffer any "shock" at the hands of the imagination, so reason does not suffer any humiliation from nature in the experience of the sublime. Kant's emphasis in this passage further underscores how the aesthetic is bound up with a moral bearing, for an ultimately imperturbable and undegraded subject is all important for him. The Kantian subject stands to reason, in both senses of the phrase.

70. Although there is an interest in Kant's disinterestedness; see Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, sec. 41, and note 17 above. Some compelling reasons for the eighteenth-century preoccupation with disinterestedness in the fields of aesthetics and literature are given in Martha Woodmansee, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), esp. chap. 1. On the origins of the term, see Jerome Stolnitz, "On the Origins of 'Aesthetic Disinterestedness,'" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 20 (Winter 1961): 131–143.

71. For a discussion of this and other ambiguities in the *Critique of Judgment* see Michael Podro, *The Manifold in Perception: Theories of Art from Kant to Hildebrand* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), sec. 2.

72. Kant writes tellingly in this regard in the "Analytic of the Beautiful." Making the distinction between the pleasant (that which gratifies) and the beautiful (that which pleases in itself), he states: "As regards the interest of inclination in the case of the pleasant, everyone says that hunger is the best sauce, and everything that is eatable is relished by people with a healthy appetite; and thus a satisfaction of this sort shows no choice directed by taste. It is only when the want is appeased that we can distinguish which of many men has taste or has not taste" (*Critique of Judgment*, 44).

73. Richard Shusterman, "Of the Scandal of Taste: Social Privilege as Nature in the Aesthetic Theories of Hume and Kant," in *Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics and the Reconstruction of Art*, ed. Paul Mattick Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 96–119.

74. See Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 54–56. Cassirer (*Kant's Life and Thought*, 353) eloquently defines Kant's notion of "purposiveness" as "the lawfulness of the contingent." In the last paragraph of the conclusion to this book I draw out the connotations of this phrase.

75. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 73. Hereafter cited in text.

76. In her essay "'Vision Itself Has Its History,'" Claire Farago offers a discussion of Franz Kugler's *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, first published in 1841–42, a very popular study by the most widely-read art historian of the day. As Farago notes, George Kubler cites this study as the moment when anthropologists and art historians parted company. The footnote to Kant's third *Critique* offers up in bold relief the ideational substructure on which this division was conceived. Claire Farago, "'Vision Itself Has Its History:' 'Race,' Nation, and Renaissance Art History," in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450–1650*, ed. Farago (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 67–88.

77. William Pietz, "Fetish," in *Critical Terms for Art History*, ed. Robert S. Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 197–198. See also the series of articles by William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish, I," *Res*, no. 9 (Spring 1985): 5–17; "The Problem of the Fetish, II: The Origin of the Fetish," *Res*, no. 13 (Spring 1987): 23–45; "The Problem of the Fetish IIIa: Bosman's Guinea and the Enlightenment Theory of Fetishism," *Res*, no. 14 (Autumn 1988): 105–123. The Enlightenment construction of "primitive" art should be considered in this context as well, as it is in the study by Frances S. Connelly, *The Sleep of Reason: Primitivism in Modern European and Art and Aesthetics, 1725–1907* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

78. Pietz, "Fetish," 199. Although Pietz discusses Kant's third *Critique* "as a solution to the problem of fetishism" for reasons other than those which I here highlight, my view concurs with his. Kant's particular use of the fetish in his *Observations* of 1764 demonstrates that from the outset, detachment from the object was a defining feature of the sublime for him.

79. For a powerful critique of modernist opticality see Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993). And more generally Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

80. The distinctions between these modes of thought is explored in chapter 3.

81. Timothy J. Reiss, *The Discourse of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 39. In his analysis of the "analytico-referential" discourse of modernism, Reiss notes the highly interesting relation between the phrase *je ne sais quoi*, the first substantive use of which occurs in 1628, and its consecration "in the second half of the century as the object of discussions on the sublime, which will become in turn the foundation of discussions on taste and of the new science of aesthetics in the eighteenth century" (39). While Reiss does not mention Kant here, we may consider him in this context. The sublime certainly has its roots in the *je ne sais quoi*, in that which eludes ready definition. For Kant, however, the experience of the sublime turns more on a *déjà vu*, since what the subject discovers is something unpleasantly familiar, namely the stubborn persistence of "a higher-purposiveness" in his own faculty of mind.

82. On the other hand see the path-breaking study by Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982). Gilligan demonstrates why detachment, which marks an important stage of moral development in the universal theories put forth by Jean Piaget, and later developed by Lawrence Kohlberg, may be uncongenial for female subjects.

83. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 82. The contained form of the beautiful versus the boundless form of the sublime is captured well in the original German, where Kant contrasts the *Begrenzung* of the beautiful form to the *Unbegrenztheit* of the sublime. The proviso that the formlessness—or boundlessness—represented in the sublime must likewise be present in its totality to thought means that, by definition, the sublime cannot exceed thought.

84. Ibid., 23, 83–84, translation modified.

85. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 104; translation modified.

86. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 84; translation modified. While omitted from the English translation, the word "use" is italicized in the original German.

87. Kant states that "the only being which has the purpose of its existence in itself is

*man,* who can determine his purposes by reason" (69). Writing generally about the role of reason and introspection in the age of Enlightenment, Hannah Arendt evokes the broader claims of the autonomy of reason of which Kant's sublime is only a part:

> How can human freedom be so enormously extended that it no longer collides with limits; how can introspection be so isolated that the thinking individual no longer need smash his head against the wall of "irrational" reality? . . . If thinking rebounds back upon itself and finds its solitary object within the soul—if, that is, it becomes introspection—it distinctly produces (so long as it remains rational) a semblance of unlimited power by the very act of isolation from the world. . . . Man's autonomy becomes hegemony over all possibilities; reality merely impinges and rebounds.

Hannah Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen: The Life of a Jewess,* ed. Liliane Weissberg, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 90. (Arendt's book was first published in 1957, although the manuscript was essentially finished when she left Germany in 1933.)

88. This is most specifically addressed in Heidegger's "Letter on Humanism," in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings,* ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 213–265; Heidegger, *The Question concerning Technology, and Other Essays,* trans. William Lovitt (New York: Garland, 1977); Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* [1944], ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); as well as Arendt, *Human Condition.* See also Beiner, "Kant, the Sublime, and Nature," who asserts that the Kantian sublime "marks an apotheosis of Western subjectivism, as Heidegger might say" (281). Vanessa Rumble makes the compelling point that the "very terminology of sacrifice (*Opfer*) and domination (*Herrschaft*) in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* may well have originated in the description of the sublime in the *Critique of Judgment.* The sacrifice (*Aufopferung*) of imagination to the dominance (*Gewalt*) of reason, a process whose violence Kant acknowledged, is depicted with some zeal." Vanessa Rumble, "Sacrifice and Domination: Kantian and Kierkegaardian Paradigms of Overcoming," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 20, no. 3 (1994): 33 n. 11.

89. Rumble, "Sacrifice and Domination," 26.

90. Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* 16. It is no coincidence that the sublime is defined by Kant as a reflective judgment. For just as the mind of the subject ascends in the movement of the reflective judgment, so the sublime elevates the subject by enabling him to discover "a higher purposiveness."

91. It should be said that the sublime issues forth when the imagination cannot comprehend the object in the Kantian sense. Kant defines comprehension as the single intuition holding the many in the one. In the movement of the sublime the imagination is required to exceed beyond the maximum implied in comprehension (*Zusammenfassung*) in the direction of the infinite of apprehension (*Auffassung*). As the German word *Auf-fassung* indicates, in apprehension the imagination raises itself, exceeds itself toward the boundless, which Kant actually defines as bound by a law of reason. In the sublime, then, that supremely Kantian of subjects, the *Weltbaumeister,* suppresses and domesticates that which initially overpowered the imagination by bringing it within the canny domicile of its own mental architectonic.

92. In "The Nuclear Sublime," *Diacritics* 14 (Summer 1984): 6, Frances Ferguson points out that "when Kant stipulates that no man-made objects, no products of human art, can be sublime, that exclusion constitutes an exclusion of objects that can be seen under the rubric of property. . . . The trouble with property is that its essential nature is not determined by its owner; it would not be property unless it were exchangeable. . . . The virtue of the sublime is that it cannot be exchanged, that each experience of sublimity is permanently bound not just to a subjective judgment but to its particular subjective judge." Perhaps this is also why in the third *Critique* Kant writes so adamantly against the frame. For the frame is not only *parergon,* but the very large frames made for late eighteenth-century paintings are substantial bits of property as well. After all, Kant was writing at the time of the formation of the bourgeois public sphere and the shift to a market economy.

93. Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* 90, 91.

94. My subsequent discussion of ruins refers solely to natural ruins rather than to artificial or sham ruins.

95. In this crucial sense ruins differ from nature per se, which does serve Kant as a representation of the sublime.

96. Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* 100–101. An analogous passage is vividly captured by Friedrich Schiller in one of his letters; see *On the Aesthetic Education of Man (1794–1795),* trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 25th letter, pt. 3, 185. On Schiller's letter in this context see my introduction.

97. Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* 105, 102. Nevertheless, as Kant writes in his 1795 essay, "Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch" (in *Kant: Political Writings,* ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], 104), "Reason, as the highest legislative moral power, absolutely condemns war . . . and sets up peace as an immediate duty."

98. In this sense, the role of the ruin shares some similarities to that of the folly. For a brief exposition on the folly as "a necessary evil," see Anthony Vidler, "History of the Folly," in *Follies: Architecture for the Late-Twentieth-Century Landscape,* exh. cat. (New York: Leo Castelli Gallery, 1983), 10–13.

99. Jost Hermand, *Von Mainz nach Weimar (1793–1919): Studien zur Deutschen Literatur* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1969), 13. As registered in a remark by Ludwig Wekhrlin in 1784, the strength of public opinion was beginning to make itself felt at this time: "At present, public opinion has the predominant power; in it speaks the voice of public reason, which is articulated by the writers and has already caused an incredible amount of good"; Wekhrlin, *Das graue Ungeheuer,* vol. 2 [1784], 123, quoted in Rudolf Vierhaus, "'Sie und Nicht Wir': Deutsche Urteile über den Ausbruch der Französischen Revolution," in *Deutschland und die Französische Revolution,* ed. Jürgen Voss (Munich: Artemis, 1983), 3. Wekhrlin's statement points to the necessity of the scholar-writer as the transmitter of reason to the reading public.

100. Caroline von Schiller, quoted in G. P. Gooch, *Germany and the French Revolution* (London: Longmans Green, 1920), 361. Compare this with Goethe's response (383): "I, on the other hand, who with my own eyes observed the ghastly, ungovernable consequences of the violent dissolution of all bonds, and clearly perceived a similar secret agitation in my own country, held fast to the established order." It should be noted that the opinion of German intellectuals often changed during the course of the events in France. Initial enthusiasm frequently paled as the reign of terror set in. On the German response to the French Revolution see, in addition to Gooch and Voss, *Deutschland und die Französische Revolution:* Jacques Droz, *L'allemagne et la révolution française* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1949); Horst Günther, ed., *Die französische Revolution: Berichte und Deutungen deutsche Schriftsteller und Historiker* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985); Marianne Henn, "The Other Voice: The Reaction of German Women Writers to the French Revolution," *Occasional Papers in German Studies,* no. 8 (February 1996): 1–22; Harold Mah, "The French Revolution and the Problem of German Modernity: Hegel, Heine, and Marx," *New German Critique,* no. 50 (Spring–Summer 1990), 3–20; and Karol Sauerland, "Goethes, Schillers, Fr. Schlegels und Novalis' Reaktionen auf die neuen politischen, konstitutionellen und sozialphilosophischen Fragen, die die französische Revolution aufwarf," in *Dass eine Nation die ander verstehen möge: Festschrift für Marian Szyrocki zu seinem 60: Geburtstag,* ed. Norbert Honsza (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), 621–635.

101. On this point see Hermand, *Von Mainz nach Weimar,* 22–36.

102. Laugier's "natural model," and its historical and architectural context, are discussed in Anthony Vidler, "The Idea of Type: The Transformation of the Academic Ideal, 1750–1830," *Oppositions* 8 (Spring 1977), 94–115; and in his book *The Writing of the Walls: Architectural Theory in the Late Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), esp. 7–21. It should be remarked that whereas Rousseau (Kant too, for that matter) stresses the importance of sociability for a society however primitive, Vidler notes that "Laugier, in contradistinction to Rousseau, had chosen to eliminate altogether the *social* roots of dwelling, preferring architectural criteria derived from the internal logic of architecture to the external influences of customs or mores." (20). While this etching perhaps does not depict a Rousseauian sense of the social, it does capture the spirit behind a certain kind of reform inspired by Rousseau, which was popular at this time.

103. By way of comparison it might be useful at this point to mention Hubert Robert's famous painting *The Grande Galerie of the Louvre Seen as a Ruin,* exhibited at the salon of 1796. While the overgrowth of moss and ivy on the ruined gallery in Robert's painting clearly indicate that this is a meditation on destruction and the passage of time, the composition nevertheless points to a civilization that will remain. As Michelangelo's slave reclines on the rubble at the right-hand side of the canvas, an artist, purposefully placed at the center of the composition, sketches the very upright statue of the Apollo Belvedere. Despite human destruction or natural decay, we might say that here, at least, the ideal functions as both the origin and endpoint of a society not lost to the notion of human perfectibility.

104. This historical and political context is well articulated in Frederick Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790–1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), 13–56. On Kant's concept of enlightenment in its contemporary context see Gisbert Beyerhaus, "Kants 'Programm' der Aufklärung aus dem Jahre 1784," *Kant-Studien* 26 (1921): 1–16; H. B. Nisbet, "'Was ist Aufklärung?': The Concept of Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *Journal of European Studies* 12, no. 46 (June 1982): 77–95; James Schmidt, "The Question of Enlightenment: Kant, Mendelssohn, and the *Mittwochsgesellschaft,*" *Journal of the History of Ideas,* 50, no. 2 (April–June 1989): 269–291; and Christoph Schulte, "Kant und die jüdische Aufklärung in Berlin," in *Immanuel Kant und die Berliner Aufklärung,* ed. Dina Emundts (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2000), 80–97.

105. Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?" [1784], in *On History,* 6. See also Willi Goetschel, *Constituting Critique: Kant's Writing as Critical Practice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 144–166. For a critique of Kantian notions of the public sphere and of publicity see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* [1962], trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 102–117; and Pheng Cheah, "Violent Light: The Idea of Publicness in Modern Philosophy and in Global Neocolonialism," *Social Text* 43 (Fall 1995): 163–190.

106. The reasons put forth for the philosopher's rejection of revolution are varied, and offer no ready consensus. See among others A. C. Armstrong, "Kant's Philosophy of Peace and War," *Journal of Philosophy* 28, no. 8 (April 9, 1931): 197–204; H. S. Reiss, "Kant and the Right of Rebellion," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 17 (1956): 179–192; Lewis White Beck, "Kant and the Right of Revolution," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 32 (1971): 411–422; as well as the more recent discussions by Henrich, *Aesthetic Judgment and the Moral Image of the World;* and Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism.* Relevant passages from Kant's own writings are referred to below.

107. The sun is described by Kant as "the point of view of reason" in his final essay, "The Contest of the Faculties" [1798], in Reiss, *Kant: Political Writings,* 180. Kant continues (188), "What sequence can progress be expected to follow? The answer is: not the usual sequence *from the bottom upwards, but from the top downwards.*" On the "obedience" of the citizen, see also Alfred Stern, *Der Einfluss der Französischen Revolution auf das deutsche Geistesleben* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1928), 179–184.

108. On "human actions" as the appearance of the freedom of the will, see Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?" and "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," in *On History.*

109. Kant, "Contest of the Faculties," in Reiss, *Kant: Political Writings,* 181. Since, to follow Kant, "we are dealing with freely acting beings to whom one can *dictate* in advance what they *ought* to do, but of whom one cannot *predict* what they actually *will* do," the notion of progress is a problem (180). Historical signs, however, enable the historian to impute the quality of progress to human affairs both past and present. To this end, we might consider the ruin as an inversion of the Kantian historical sign. For a brief consideration of the Kantian historical sign in relation to Walter Benjamin's historical method, see chapter 4, section titled "Historical Perception."

110. Kant, "Contest of the Faculties," 182. The philosopher also alludes to the French Revolution in *Critique of Judgment,* sec. 65, where he makes an analogy between a biological organism and the organization of the body politic. See as well his 1793 critique of the cliché, "On the Common Saying: That may be correct in theory, but it is of no use in practice," in Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy,* trans. Mary J. Gregor and Allen Wood (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 1996), 277–309. When Kant writes of a "sympathy which borders almost on enthusiasm," his use of the word "enthusiasm" may have resonances inaudible to the modern reader. Seeking to uncouple enthusiasm from its association with fanaticism and a degrading loss of self, Kant writes that "true enthusiasm is always directed exclusively towards the *ideal*, particularly towards that which is purely moral (such as the concept of right), and it cannot be coupled with selfish interests." On fanaticism versus enthusiasm, see also Kant, *Observations*, 108.

111. On this Kantian distinction see the essays by Lewis White Beck, *The Actor and the Spectator* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975). Dorinda Outram makes the important point that

> the public body on which the middle class founded its political legitimation during the Revolution was that of *homo clausus*, the male type validated by his separation of affect from instinct, by body control leading to an increasingly painful yet necessary sense of separation from other individual human beings. *Homo clausus*, legitimated himself by his superiority to the somatic relationships enjoyed by other classes—aristocracy, peasants and workers—and by the other gender. In other words, what he possessed was a body which was also a *non*-body, which, rather than projecting itself, *re*tained itself.

Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class and Political Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 158. As Kant writes in the mid to late 1770s, "One should never be beside oneself, but rather in *possession* of oneself" (Man muss niemals ausser sich, sondern bei *sich selbst* sein). Kant, *Reflection* 335, *Kants Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (Akademie Ausgabe) 15:132, quoted in John Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 359 n. 154. Aiming to take Kantian scholarship in a new direction, Susan Meld Shell avers that Kant's "peculiar attentiveness to his own bodily state—the consequence, by his own account, of a 'disposition' (*Anlage*) to hypochondria—has a more intimate relation to his philosophic achievement than is generally supposed." Susan Meld Shell, *The Embodiment of Reason: Kant on Spirit, Generation, and Community* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 265.

112. Kant, "Contest of the Faculties," 184.

113. When Kant advocates a division between theory and practice, he is among good historical company. In "Immanuel Kant, loyaler preußischer Staatsbürger und Anhänger der Französischen Revolution—ein Widerspruch," in *Deutscher Idealismus und Französische Revolution*, Schriften aus dem Karl-Marx-Haus, no. 37 (Trier: Karl-Marx-Haus, 1988), 9, Peter Burg notes: "This attribute of German mentality stands in a long religious and intellectual-historical tradition. Martin Luther's characteristic dualism of soul and world, inside and outside, freedom and obligation survived in secular consciousness." To understand Kant's separation of theory and practice in regard to the French Revolution, one must certainly keep in mind that at the time he was writing his essays, Prussia was operating under censorship laws. Kant's rejection of revolution in his essays may therefore be considered—as it has been by certain authors—a necessary means to ensure the publication of his essays. Yet if we consider Kant's general views on rationality for humankind, his division between theory and practice begins to make sense, since Kant always advocates judgment over action. For a philosopher still championed by contemporary proponents of liberalism, however, such an outright rejection of revolution is odd indeed.

114. I borrow the term "judging spectator" from Hannah Arendt. See her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), as well as the useful interpretive essay by Roland Beiner, "Hannah Arendt on Judging," 89–156. Published posthumously, Arendt's lectures demonstrate why Kant's *Critique of Judgment* may be considered an important work of political philosophy. The separation between theory and practice, and the absence of a faculty of action in Kant's system, point to the philosopher's concern for the progress of the species over that of the individual. Arendt remarks that this "escape, as it were, from the particular, which is itself meaningless, to the universal, from which it derives its meaning, is of course not peculiar to Kant" (26). In the

case of Kant, however, I would argue that this "escape" takes on a certain melancholy tinge, since Kant believed so strongly in the cause of enlightenment and in the "historical sign" of the French Revolution.

115. This is one of the points of Arendt's *Lectures.* In his interpretive essay to her *Lectures,* Beiner, "Hannah Arendt on Judging," 112, notes how "Kant's analysis of taste provides the concepts of communication, intersubjective agreement, and shared judgment that Arendt seeks for the reconstruction of moral horizons." Arendt's use of Kantian judgment for this purpose appears, however, too hopeful. I would add that the supremely disinterested quality of Kantian judgment renders all judgments aesthetic. If judgments are so disinterested, how can they carry the moral weight Kant—and Arendt—wish for them? In answer to such a query, Arendt would most likely appeal to the "exemplary validity" of judgments, noting how they may function as examples for us to follow. Yet there remains an antinomy here, as in Kant's own system: namely, the gap between the realms of reason and empirical history, between judgment and knowledge. Examples may have "exemplary validity," but by Kantian definition they can never become knowledge, and consequently their effectiveness is effectively undermined.

116. Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* 136. The idea of the *sensus communis* is better captured in the original German: "die Idee eines gemeinschaflichen Sinn" connotes both a sense common to all as well a sense that binds all. On the history of the idea of the *sensus communis* see David Summers, *The Judgment of Sense: Renaissance Naturalism and the Rise of Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), as well as his essay "Why Did Kant Call Taste a 'Common Sense'?" in Mattick, *Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics,* 120–151.

117. Kant, "What Is Enlightenment?" 9. Thinking for oneself is crucial for Kant in general, but it is also important for aesthetic judgment. As Kant writes in sec. 32 of the third *Critique,* the judgment of taste must be autonomous, for to make the taste of others the determining grounds of one's own taste would be heteronomy. Kant's claim not only points to the importance of the autonomy of the subject for him; it also demonstrates why taste may not be coercive but only consensual. And yet in making a judgment of taste, the subject is undoubtedly affected by the norms of taste of his society. These form a background for judgment and so help foster the consensus of aesthetic judgment. Although Kant notes the role of society in aesthetic judgment, he nevertheless insists upon the complete autonomy of the subject, and in so doing greatly undermines the role of normativity. Bearing this in mind, we should recognize then that while the Kantian subject is inner-directed, guided as he is by the "moral law within," he is nonetheless, as a member of society, directed toward tradition. In his philosophical work of 1887, *On the Genealogy of Morals,* Friedrich Nietzsche offers a critique of the tradition-directed subject, one he disparages as passively led by the "morality of mores"; Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo,* trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1969). Although we cannot explore it in detail here, it would be useful to consider aesthetic judgment as what Clifford Geertz calls a "cultural artifact," and culture itself as a "set of symbolic devices for controlling behavior"; Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), esp. 51–52.

118. Arendt translates *allgemeine Standpunkt* as general standpoint. See Arendt, *Lectures,* 71 and n. 155. I have chosen the more customary translation of universal standpoint, for I believe Kant makes such a claim in his third *Critique.* The faculty of the enlarged mentality, so dear to Kant, would, in an ideally extended state—that is, in theory—provide the subject with the point of view of the *Weltbetrachter.* According to Kant, such a position involves exercise. Or, to use Arendt's felicitous phrase, "To think with an enlarged mentality means that one trains one's imagination to go visiting" (43). In practice, however, the universal standpoint can only be a general one, a point I shall come to in a moment.

119. Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* 75–76. Though Kant claims that judgment may not be coercive but only consensual, we are provided with a glimpse of how aesthetic judgment may nevertheless become coercive. For, as Kant writes in the "Analytic of the Beautiful," 47, there must be a common taste, otherwise a universal aesthetic judgment could not exist:

> Many things may have for him charm and pleasantness—no one troubles himself at that—but if he gives out anything as beautiful, he supposes in others the same satisfaction; he judges not merely for himself, but for everyone, and speaks of beauty as

if it were a property of things. Hence he says "the *thing* is beautiful"; and he does not count on the agreement of others with this his judgment of satisfaction, because he has found this agreement several times before, but he *demands* it of them. He blames them if they judge otherwise and he denies them taste, which he nevertheless requires from them. Here, then, we cannot say that each man has his own particular taste. For this would be as much as to say that there is no taste whatever, i.e. no aesthetical judgment which can make a rightful claim upon everyone's assent.

120. Arendt, *Lectures*, 44. Arendt contrasts Kant's *Weltbetrachter* with the world citizen, for though "Kant does tell one how to take the others into account; he does not tell one how to combine with them in order to act." Here we are reminded again of the antinomy in Kant's system between the history of reason and empirical history.

121. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 286. The maxim of reason binds the subject to his own internal will and thus to the categorical imperative.

122. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 139.

123. Compare Kant's notion of the judging spectator as one defined through communication, and thus in community, with Samuel Coleridge's judgment of William Wordsworth as *Spectator ab extra*, or "isolated spectator rather than as member of community," in Thomas McFarland, *Romanticism and the Forms of Ruin: Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Modalities of Fragmentation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 145. The universal communicability of aesthetic judgment can be associated with Kant's promotion of the cosmopolitan point of view. As Arendt puts it, just as sociability is both origin and endpoint for Kant, so reason "is not made 'to isolate itself but to get into community with others'" (Arendt, *Lectures*, 40). See Kant, "Toward Perpetual Peace," 93–130; and James Bohman and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, eds., *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant's Cosmopolitan Ideal* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997).

124. This is Arendt's useful emendation.

125. Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 139.

126. At this point the universal standpoint becomes Arendt's general standpoint, though she would not have considered it in this way.

127. Kant, "Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View," 24 n. 7. On the developing historical consciousness in Germany see Peter Reill, *The German Enlightenment and the Rise of Historicism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

128. In *The Philosophy of History*, trans. James Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 98–99, Hegel makes a similar point about Africa. The view of Africa as a continent without memory and history receives its just critique in V. Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy, and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988). See also the important essay by Henri Baudet, *Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images of Non-European Man* [1959], trans. Elizabeth Wentholt (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1988).

129. Tsenay Serequeberhan, "Eurocentrism in Philosophy: The Case of Immanuel Kant," *Philosophical Forum* 27, no. 4 (Summer 1996): 333–356. Kant's Eurocentrism is most painfully apparent in the last major work edited by him, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* [1798], trans. Victor Lyle Dowdell (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 1978). See also Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, "The Color of Reason: The Idea of 'Race' in Kant's Anthropology," in *Anthropology and the German Enlightenment: Perspectives on Humanity, Bucknell Review* 38, no. 2 (1995): 200–241; and Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, ed., *Race and the Enlightenment: A Reader* (Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell, 1997).

130. In *The Sovereignty of Good*, Iris Murdoch vividly remarks upon the persistence of this Kantian subject: "How recognizable, how familiar to us is the man so beautifully portrayed in the *Grundlegung*, who confronted even with Christ turns away to consider the judgment of his own conscience and to hear the voice of his own reason. Stripped of the exiguous metaphysical background which Kant was prepared to allow him, this man is with us still, free, independent, lonely, powerful, rational, responsible, brave, the hero of so many novels and books of moral philosophy"; Murdoch quoted in Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 84.

131. Heinrich Heine, "Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany (1830s)," in *Heinrich Heine: The Romantic School and Other Essays*, ed. Jost Hermand and Robert Holub (New York: Continuum, 1985), 200. Heine's analogy demonstrates how Ger-

man cultural identity was conceived at this time in relation to the modernity of the French revolution. While France may have had her material revolution, Hegel, Heine, and Marx claimed an intellectual revolution for Germany, thereby supporting a notion of German modernity commensurate with the land of poets and thinkers, as well as a definition of German subjectivity predicated on inwardness. On this point, see Mah, "French Revolution."

132. On Speer's theory of ruin-value see Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich* [1969], trans. Richard Winston and Clara Winston (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 65–66; and Angela Schönberger, "Die Staatsbauten des Tausendjährigen Reiches als vorprogrammierte Ruinen? Zu Albert Speers Ruinenwerttheorie," *Idea: Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunsthalle* 6 (1987): 97–107.

133. Kant, of course, never considered the possibility of totalitarianism. According to him, evil would eventually destroy itself since by definition it must remain hidden. When evil makes its appearance on the public stage, it cannot stand up to the public, which for Kant represents the common interest as well as the force of enlightened opinion. Kant did not envision a time when the common interest itself would become perverted, as it did under German fascism. In this sense, as Hannah Arendt writes in "Understanding and Politics" (*Partisan Review* 20, no. 4 [July–August 1953], 388), "For those engaged in the quest for meaning and understanding, what is frightening in the rise of totalitarianism is not that it is something new, but that it has brought to light the ruin of our categories of thought and standards of judgment." This ruin of the categories of thought, and hence collapse of the faculty of judgment, is poignantly memorialized in Arendt's treatment of the trial of Adolf Eichmann, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Viking, 1963). Dagmar Barnouw notes how Arendt, in her study of Eichmann (and, I would add, in her earlier biography of Rahel Varnhagen), puts herself in the place of the protagonist, thus exemplifying the Kantian idea of "enlarged mentality." It is from this place that she comes to judgment, and it is precisely this act which made her treatment of Eichmann incomprehensible to some of her detractors, who claimed that her study "concentrated emotional and intellectual energy on the act of showing, not on the act of suffering." Barnouw, "Arendt's Construct of the Political," *New German Critique*, no. 50 (Spring–Summer 1990): 24.

134. It is interesting to compare this artificial ruin with Hubert Robert's highly romantic painting *"Temple of Philosophy" at Ermenonville*, in Hubert Burda, *Die Ruine in den Bildern Hubert Roberts* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1967), pl. 58.

135. As Elizabeth Wanning Harries argues, the classical forms of the work at Ermenonville "echo the Temple of Ancient Virtue." Its "program suggests progress rather than decay, hope rather than despair." After all, one of the mottoes on the monument is "*Qui l'achevera*?" "Who will finish it?" (*Unfinished Manner*, 92). I agree with Harries' hopeful reading of the Temple of Philosophy.

136. Immanuel Kant, *Philosophical Correspondence: 1755–1795*, ed. Arnulf Zweig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 254.

137. Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy*, 63. Ameriks concludes his chapter "Kant's Modest System" by noting how the philosopher "showed in new ways how, in the areas of taste and natural science, reason and sense can cooperate with each other without principles that involve a strict demonstration, or even a strongly unified argument, against skepticism. This refusal earned him the disdain of his successors. . . . Fortunately, what others have regarded as weaknesses here, we can now accept, at least in large part, as strengths, as further signs of Kant's proper Critical appreciation of our limits" (76–77).

138. On rationality and irrationality in "Kant's house" see Bernard Edelman, *La Maison de Kant* (Paris: Payot, 1984); and Diane Morgan, *Kant Trouble: The Obscurities of the Enlightened* (London: Routledge, 2000).

139. Consider the eloquent words of Simone Weil: "The bridges of the Greeks. We have inherited them but we do not know how to use them. We thought they were intended to have houses built upon them. We have erected skyscrapers on them to which we ceaselessly add stories. We no longer know that they are bridges, things made so that we may pass along them." Weil, "Metaxu," in *The Simone Weil Reader*, ed. George A. Panichas (New York: McKay, 1977), 364.

140. For a critique of the class connotations of the Kantian subject of aesthetic judgment see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard

Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984). See also Carol Duncan, "Teaching the Rich," *The Aesthetics of Power: Essays in Critical Art History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 135–142; and Craig Owens, "Representation, Appropriation, and Power" [1982], in *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture,* ed. Scott Bryson et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 88–113. I explore the figure of the connoisseur and forms of objectivity in my conclusion.

141. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Historical Genesis of the Pure Aesthetic," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46 (1987): 202. Tom Huhn rightly questions the novelty of Bourdieu's claims in his review in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* 54, no. 1 (Winter 1996), 88–90. See also Tony Bennett, "Really Useless 'Knowledge': A Political Critique of Aesthetics," *Literature and History* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 38–57.

142. In this context it is interesting to consider Richard Wollheim's remarks ("Painting with Words," *New York Times Book Review,* January 7, 1996, 9) on *Diderot on Art,* two volumes of Diderot's art criticism, edited and translated by John Goodman for Yale University Press, 1996. Wollheim informs us that on account of the "theoretical," humorless, and "dour impersonality" of contemporary criticism, he found it "impossible to read the two volumes under review without being overcome with how much they have to offer us now." He concludes, "What Diderot shows us is that criticism of a physical art like painting has something to tell us only so long as it retains its connection with the spontaneous reactions of the eye, the body, the mind."

143. Panofsky, "History of Art as a Humanistic Disicpline," 15.

144. On the "self-evidence" of the status of the art object for Panofsky and the implications of this assumption for the discipline of art history and its canon, see Keith Moxey, "Motivating History," in *The Practice of Persuasion: Paradox and Power in Art History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 65–89. As Moxey writes, "The principle of self-evidence is profoundly conservative; it is dedicated to the support of the status quo and ideally suited to the task of providing art history with 'scientific' respectability" (79). On Panofsky and scientific art history, see chapter 1.

145. Bourdieu, "The Historical Genesis of the Pure Aesthetic," 205. On the concept of an intellectual field see Pierre Bourdieu, "Intellectual Field and Creative Project," *Social Science Information* 8 (April 1969): 89–119; and his book *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), esp. 159–171.

146. Conceiving the idealized subject of art history as a framework implies the disciplinary and procedural senses of objectivity. For a more thorough examination of modes of objectivity in relation to the subject of aesthetic judgment and the field of art history, see my conclusion.

147. For an interesting examination of the history of mechanical objectivity, and its eventual fusion with metaphysical and aperspectival objectivity, see Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," *Representations* 49 (Fall 1992): 81–128. What Daston and Galison define as metaphysical objectivity, which "makes objectivity synonymous with truth," and aperspectival objectivity, which "identifies objectivity with the escape from any and all perspectives" (123), are certainly to be found in our own discipline. On objectivity and art history see the conclusion to this book as well as David Carrier, "Erwin Panofsky, Leo Steinberg, David Carrier: The Problem of Objectivity in Art Historical Interpretation," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 47, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 333–347; Moxey, "Motivating History"; and Leo Steinberg, "Objectivity and the Shrinking Self," *Daedalus* 98, no. 3 (Summer 1969): 824–836.

148. This phrase is drawn from Charles Taylor, "The Moral Topography of the Self," in *Hermeneutics and Psychological Theory,* ed. Stanley Messer, Louis Sass, and Robert Woolfolk (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 298–320. In arguing for an unidealized Kantian subject, I am certainly not therefore advocating a gesture that would negate or repudiate the subject altogether. Rather, in pointing out how the Kantian subject is itself divided, I am not simply pointing to an antinomy in Kant's systematics (one that would need to be addressed in a longer study, especially as it is the subject who is to bridge this antinomy, though how this is to be effected remains a point of tension in Kantian philosophy resolved only subsequently by the Hegelian dialectic). I am also interrogating the foundational premises of the Kantian subject, which have been obscured through an idealized reading of it.

## 3. Goethe, Warburg, Cassirer

1. "It is the task of systematic philosophy, which extends far beyond that of the theory of knowledge, to free the idea of the world from this onesidedness. It has to grasp the *whole system* of symbolic forms." Ernst Cassirer, *Substance and Function and Einstein's Theory of Relativity,* trans. William Curtis Swabey and Marie Collins Swabey (New York: Dover, 1953), 447. This is Cassirer's first mention in print of the term "symbolic forms." On Cassirer's extension of Kantian philosophy see Wolfgang Marx, "Cassirers Philosophie—ein Abschied von kantianisierender Letztbegründung?" in *Über Ernst Cassirers Philosophie der symbolischen Formen,* ed. Hans-Jürg Braun, Helmut Holzhey, and Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 75–87; and Ernst Wolfgang Orth, "Die Bedeutung der 'Kritik der Urteilskraft' für Cassirers Philosophie der symbolischen Formen," in *Von der Erkenntnistheorie zur Kulturphilosophie: Studien zu Ernst Cassirers Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1996), 176–189.

2. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms,* vol. 1, *Language* [1923], trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 80.

3. Ibid., 78.

4. Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), 23–41.

5. Goethe, Maxim 1220: "Der Mensch begreift niemals, wie anthropomorphisch er ist." This maxim is underlined in ink [by Aby Warburg] on page 36 of Goethe, *Maximen und Reflexionen: Nach der Handschriften des Goethe und Schiller Archivs,* ed. Max Hecker (Weimar: Verlag der Goethe-Gesellschaft, 1907). This book is in the Warburg Institute Library, London.

6. Goethe, *Maxims and Reflections* [from *Elective Affinities,* Ottilie's Diary, 1809], trans. Elisabeth Stopp (London: Penguin, 1998), 7. Cited in Ernst Cassirer, "'Geist' und 'Leben' in der Philosophie der Gegenwart," in *Geist und Leben: Schriften zu den Lebensordnungen von Natur und Kunst, Geschichte und Sprache,* ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Leipzig: Reclam, 1993), 46.

7. Aby Warburg, "Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America," in *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America,* trans. Michael Steinberg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 8–16. For Warburg's explanation of "the symbolic power of the serpent image," see 55 n. 4. See also Balaji Mundkur, *The Cult of the Serpent: An Interdisciplinary Survey of Its Manifestations and Origins* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983).

8. Warburg, "Images," 50. Warburg's remark evokes Hans Vaihinger's philosophy of "as if." A bibliographic note by Warburg documents his acquaintance with Vaihinger's work (Warburg Institute Library [hereafter WIA], Zettelkästen 051/028535; unless otherwise noted, "WIA" refers to the institute's London archives). For an illustration of this note see Spyros Papapetros, "The Eternal Seesaw: Oscillations in Warburg's Revival," *Oxford Art Journal* 26, no. 2 (2003): 173. Hans Vaihinger's (1852–1933) philosophy of "as if" draws on Kant's idea of the imaginary focus. In every chapter of this book I examine how the imaginary focus, a point of view beyond perception, motivates one's thinking along a line of speculation from seeing to representing to pure knowing. Vaihinger places the imaginary focus at the center of his philosophy; according to him, suppositions of "as if" are necessary fictions that enable humankind to live in an irrational world. His major philosophical work studies manifold uses of "as if," from Kant's "heuristic fictions" to Nietzsche's "doctrine of unconscious illusion." Hans Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of "As If": A System of the Theoretical, Practical and Religious Fictions of Mankind,* trans. C. K. Ogden (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1924). As Papapetros makes clear in his review, both "Kant and Nietzsche are present in Warburg, and attempting to undermine one or the other can only impoverish the complexity of his thinking" (172). This chapter was written before the publication of Papapetros's review, yet my thoughts concur with his. Rather than place too heavy an emphasis on reason (Kant) or unreason (Nietzsche), I use Warburg's understanding of the symbolic form of the snake as a window onto his theory of the inherent polarity of the symbol, a theory that is, for its part, a theory of "as-if."

9. Cassirer and Warburg's admiration for Goethe as the touchstone of European humanism existed as part of a cult of Goethe on behalf of the German-Jewish bourgeoisie. Cas-

sirer's writings are suffused with references to Goethe; Warburg's correspondence, his scholarly writings, and his acquisitions for the library likewise demonstrate his passion for Goethe's ideas. In a letter to Max Morris, editor of *Der junge Goethe,* Warburg asks after the source of Goethe's concept of polarity, since, after much effort, he cannot locate this in the Goethe literature. WIA, GC, A. Warburg to M. Morris, May 13, 1907.

10. Cassirer, *Language,* 76. For Cassirer, then, the "object cannot be regarded as a naked thing in itself, independent of the essential categories of natural [or cultural] science: for only within these categories which are required to constitute its form can it be described at all" (76). I aimed to demonstrate in chapter 1 that systematicity requires the presupposition of a purely functional unity as an imaginary focus. Commencing with the idea of a unified system enables one to hypothesize how elements within that system might be ordered at the deepest possible register of knowledge. In his table of the conceptual system of scientific art history (discussed in chapter 1), for instance, Panofsky begins with the hypothetical idea of unity in order to determine the constitution and relation of the "spheres" of a systematic art history.

11. Warburg strove to understand the meaning of visual images in the deepest sense. To use the words of Edgar Wind: "The concept of pure artistic vision, which Wölfflin developed in reacting to the ideas of Burckhardt, Warburg contrasts with the concept of culture as a whole, within which artistic vision fulfils a necessary function. However, to understand this function—so the argument continues—one should not dissociate it from its connection with the functions of other elements of that culture. One should rather ask the twofold question: what do these other cultural functions (religion and poetry, myth and science, society and the state) mean for the pictorial imagination; and what does the image mean for these other functions." Edgar Wind, "Aby Warburg's Concept of *Kulturwissenschaft,*" in *The Eloquence of Symbols,* ed. Jaynie Anderson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 25. On Warburg's cultural science see also Michael Diers, "Warburg and the Warburgian Tradition of Cultural History," *New German Critique* 65 (Spring–Summer 1995): 59–73; Felix Gilbert, "From Art History to the History of Civilization: Aby Warburg," in *History: Choice and Commitment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977), 423–439; Udo Kultermann, "Kulturwissenschaft: Zum 100. Geburtstag von Aby M. Warburg," in *Aby Warburg: Von Michelangelo bis zu den Puebloindianern,* ed. Kulturforum Warburg, Warburg Schriften, vol. 5 (Warburg: Hermann Hermes, 1991), 87–92; and Dieter Wuttke, "Aby M. Warburgs Kulturwissenschaft," in *Dazwischen: Kulturwissenschaft auf Warburgs Spuren,* by Dieter Wuttke (Baden-Baden: Verlag Valentin Koerner, 1996), 2:737–765. On cultural science (*Kulturwissenschaft*) more generally see the recent studies by Heide Appelsmeyer and Elfriede Billmann-Mahecha, eds., *Kulturwissenschaft: Felder einer prozessorientierten wissenschaftlichen Praxis* (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft Verlag, 2001); Hartmut Böhme, Peter Matussek, and Lothar Müller, eds., *Orientierung Kulturwissenschaft: Was sie kann, was sie will* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2000); Friedrich Kittler, *Eine Kulturgeschichte der Kulturwissenschaft* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2000).

12. Fritz Saxl, "Ernst Cassirer," in *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer,* ed. Paul A. Schlipp [1949] (New York: Tudor, 1958), 47–48. More specifically, Saxl writes to Warburg that he began the tour in the second room of the library, with the cupboard marked "Symbol." Cassirer declared to Saxl that the problem of the symbol had preoccupied him for a long time and that he was working on this topic at the moment. Cassirer, Saxl writes, was acquainted with only a small portion of the literature Warburg had amassed; moreover, he was "completely unfamiliar with the visual manifestations of the symbol in mimicry and dance." WIA, GC, F. Saxl to A. Warburg, November 28, 1920.

13. Warburg entered Bellevue in 1921. Carl Georg Heise comments on Warburg's illness in his *Persönliche Erinnerungen an Aby Warburg* (New York, 1947), 42–50 (private printing by Eric Warburg). See also Karl Königseder, "Aby Warburg in 'Bellevue,'" in *Aby M. Warburg: "Ekstatische Nymphe . . . trauende Flussgott"; Portrait eines Gelehrten,* ed. Robert Galitz and Brita Reimers (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 1995), 74–98. On the impact of World War I on Warburg, and on the affairs of his library during these years, see Michael Diers, "Kreuzlinger Passion," *kritische berichte* 7, no. 4/5 (1979): 5–14. For an interesting, brief account of Kreuzlingen as "part of the [upper class's] cultivated, noble and nervous world" see Ulrich Raulff, "Nachwort," in *Schlangenritual: Ein Reisebereicht,* by Aby Warburg (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 1988), 88–90.

14. On Warburg as a revenant see Heise, *Persönliche Erinnerungen,* 50; and Claudia Naber, "Pompeji in Neu-Mexico: Aby Warburgs amerikanische Reise," *Freibeuter: Vierteljahreszeitschrift für Kultur und Politik* 38 (1988): 88, especially the unpublished letter by Warburg that she cites. For an account of Binswanger's particular blend of psychological epistemology during the years 1911–25 see Susan Lanzoni, "An Epistemology of the Clinic: Ludwig Binswanger's Phenomenology of the Other," *Critical Inquiry* 30, no. 1 (Autumn 2003): 160–186. Warburg suggested the lecture to Binswanger as a way to determine whether he was capable of "'scholarly work' and thus—in the foreseeable future—a return to his usual life" (Raulff, "Nachwort," 65). On the relation between Warburg and Binswanger see Ulrich Raulff, "Zur Korrespondenz Ludwig Binswanger—Aby Warburg im Universitätsarchiv Tübingen," in *Aby Warburg: Akten des internationalen Symposiums Hamburg 1990,* ed. Horst Bredekamp, Michael Diers, and Charlotte Schoell-Glass (Weinheim: VCH, Acta Humaniora, 1991), 55–70.

15. Aby Warburg to "Ihnen und der Konferenz" (unidentified), from Kreuzlingen, April 12, 1924. Quoted in Naber, "Pompeji in Neu-Mexico," 89.

16. Ten years after Warburg's death Saxl published an abbreviated English translation of the lecture: "A Lecture on the Serpent Ritual," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 2 (1939): 277–292. The complete lecture is published in English in Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America* (see note 7 above), which includes Steinberg's interpretive essay "Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture: A Reading." The first Italian translation appeared in "Il rituale del serpente," *Aut Aut,* n.s., no. 199–200 (1984): 17–39. The first German edition appeared in 1988 in Warburg, *Schlangenritual.* A French translation has recently appeared in Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg et l'image en mouvement,* trans. Sibylle Muller (Paris: Macula, 1998). On Warburg's 1923 lecture see *Photographs at the Frontier: Aby Warburg in America 1895–1896,* ed. Benedetta Cestelli Guidi and Nicholas Mann (London: Merrell Holberton; The Warburg Institute, 1998); Diers, "Kreuzlinger Passion"; Joseph Leo Koerner, "Pale Face and Redskin," *New Republic,* March 24, 1997, 30–38; Ernst Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* [1970] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 216–227; Philippe-Alain Michaud, "Un Pueblo à Hambourg: le voyage d'Aby Warburg au Nouveau-Mexique, 1895–1896," *Cahiers du Musée d'Art Moderne* 52 (Summer 1995): 43–73; and his book *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion* [1998], trans. Sophie Hawkes (New York: Zone Books, 2004), 171–229; Claudia Naber, "Pompeji in Neu-Mexico"; Fritz Saxl, "Warburgs Besuch in Neu-Mexico," in Aby Warburg, *Ausgewählte Schriften und Würdigungen,* ed. Dieter Wuttke (Baden-Baden: Valentin Koerner Verlag, 1979), 317–326; Sigrid Weigel, "Aby Warburgs 'Schlangenritual': Korrespondenzen zwischen der Lektüre kultureller und geschriebene Texte," *Paragrana* 3 (1994): 9–27; and Salvatore Settis, "Kunstgeschichte als vergleichende Kulturwissenschaft: Aby Warburg, die Pueblo-Indianer und das Nachleben der Antike," *Künstlerischer Austausch: Artistic Exchange,* Akten des XXVIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte Berlin, 15.–20. Juli 1992, vol. 1, ed. Thomas Gaehtgens (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993), 139–158.

17. See, for instance, Raulff, "Nachwort."

18. As Claire Farago rightly remarks, this literature obscures "the very complex ethical issues that arise when ethnographers (whether their base of operation is anthropology, art history, or some other field) violate the decorum and privacy of their subjects of study." While Warburg, whose travel documents from the Department of the Interior introduce him as a "German scientist" and a "man of means," violated Hopi privacy in order to gain knowledge of it, Farago makes clear that the continuing use of his photographs of Native American rituals in the recent literature on his lecture constitutes another impropriety. Claire Farago, "Silent Moves: On Excluding the Ethnographic Subject from the Discourse of Art History," in *Art History and Its Institutions,* ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (London: Routledge, 2002), 193. For Warburg's letter of introduction see WIA, 040/020430–31, no. 1. Warburg's photographs of Native American rituals are not illustrated in this chapter. I draw on Warburg's characterization of Native American ritual, but in order to move in a new direction.

19. Steinberg, "Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture," 102; see also 76–77; and Raulff, "Nachwort," 82–83.

20. WIA, GC, A. Warburg to F. Saxl, April 26, 1923; reprinted in Warburg, *Schlangenritual,* 60.

21. See Aby Warburg, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia Ferrara," in *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, trans. David Britt (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 563–591. Walter Benjamin finds a common thread of "disdain for the conventional demarcations among the sciences" in Goethe, Bachofen, and Warburg. Walter Benjamin, "Johann Jakob Bachofen," trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin*, vol. 3, *1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 15.

22. Saxl, "Warburgs Besuch," 317. On the history of Warburg's library see Fritz Saxl, "The History of Warburg's Library (1886–1944)" in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 325–338; and Aby Warburg, *Tagebuch der Kulturwissenschaftlichten Bibliothek Warburg*, ed. Karen Michels and Charlotte Schoell-Glass (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001). Also of interest is Bernhard Buschendorf, *Porträt aus Büchern: Bibliothek Warburg und Warburg Institute, Hamburg-London 1933* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 1993); Salvatore Settis, "Warburg continuatus: Descrizione di una biblioteca," *Quaderni storici*, n.s. 20, no. 58 (1985): 5–38; and Tilmann von Stockenhausen, *Die Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg: Architektur, Einrichtung und Organisation* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 1992).

23. On Warburg's relation to anthropology see the essays by Giorgio Agamben and Alessandro Dal Lago in *Aut Aut*, nos. 199–200 (1984): 67–91.

24. Peter Burke, "History and Anthropology in 1900," in Cestelli Guidi and Mann, *Photographs at the Frontier*, 20. From a growing literature on the history of anthropology in Germany see Andrew Zimmerman, *Anthropology and Antihumanism in Germany* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001). Zimmerman examines the social and material contexts of German anthropology, showing its insistence on a barrier between the human and the natural, as well as on a static conception of "natural peoples." See also H. Glenn Penny and Matti Bunzl, eds., *Worldly Provincialism: German Anthropology in the Age of Empire* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).

25. Ernst Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 89. Gombrich continues: "To understand the alarm with which Bastian contemplated this contingency it is necessary to recall his methodological bias. He preached an 'inductive' approach to culture by which he meant the painstaking collection of data. From these data, so he thought, a new science of human psychology would emerge, provided they were used for a 'statistics of ideas' with the closest attention to the varieties observed all over the world." (89). On Bastian, the founding of ethnology, and the ethnographic museum in Germany see H. Glenn Penny, *Objects of Culture: Ethnology and Ethnographic Museums in Imperial Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

26. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 89.

27. "Ironically, the two scholars who more than anyone foresaw the direction that anthropology was to take, had to reject 'anthropology' as a term because it was, in their time, too biological. . . . So they chose *Psychologie*, which they understood, with Herbart, to be a discipline whose purpose was 'to make the total of inner experience comprehensible . . . .'" Ivan Kalmar, "The *Völkerpsychologie* of Lazarus and Steinthal and the Modern Concept of Culture," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 48, no. 4 (1987): 673–674. Here Kalmar cites Johann F. Herbart, *A Text-Book in Psychology: An Attempt to Found the Science of Psychology on Experience, Metaphysics, and Mathematics* (New York, 1896), 1, trans. from the second German edition, first published in 1834 (first edition, 1815). Warburg owned a three-year run of the *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft*. This journal was succeeded in 1891 by the *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde*, which, as the title implies, marks a shift from the study of collective psychology to that of folklore.

28. Ivan Kalmar, "The Völkerpsychologie of Lazarus and Steinthal," 676. On culture as a symbolic system see Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

29. Moritz Lazarus, "Einige synthetische Gedanken zur Völkerpsychologie," *Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie und Sprachwissenschaft* 3 (1865): 55. Cited in Kalmar, "The Völkerpsychologie of Lazarus and Steinthal," 679. Kalmar recounts that at "a time when their anthropological ideas were already quite fully developed, both Lazarus and Boas found themselves forced to react to a particularly vicious anti-Semitic campaign." (688).

30. Kalmar, "The Völkerpsychologie of Lazarus and Steinthal," 687. Wilhelm Wundt

(1832–1920) produced the definitive study in the field of "collective psychology" inaugurated by Lazarus and Steinthal (Wilhelm Wundt, *Völkerpsychologie: eine Untersuchung der Entwicklungsgesetze von Sprache, Mythus und Sitte* [Darmstadt: Aalen, 1975]). In contrast to the work of his predecessors, Wundt's ten-volume cross-cultural study of myth, religion, and language is infused with the evolutionary ideas of social Darwinism.

31. On Boas see Douglas Cole, *Franz Boaz: The Early Years, 1858–1906* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999); Alexander Lesser, "Franz Boas and the Modernization of Anthropology," in *History, Evolution, and the Concept of Culture: Selected Papers of Alexander Lesser,* ed. Sidney Mintz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 15–33; George W. Stocking Jr., "Frans Boas and the Culture Concept in Historical Perspective," in *Race, Culture, and Evolution: Essays in the History of Anthropology* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 195–233; *A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of American Anthropology 1883–1911,* ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989); and *Volksgeist als Method and Ethic: Essays on Boasian Ethnography and the German Anthropological Tradition,* ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996).

32. Hans Liebeschütz, "Aby Warburg (1866–1929) as Interpreter of Civilisation," *Year Book of the Leo Baeck Institute* 16 (1971): 225–236. On Warburg and anti-Semitism see also A. M. Meyer, "Aby Warburg in His Early Correspondence," *American Scholar* 57, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 445–452; Charlotte Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg und der Antisemitismus: Kulturwissenschaft als Geistespolitik* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1998); as well as her essay, "The Archive's Silent Record: Anti-Semitism and the Formation of Aby Warburg's 'Cultural Science,'" in *Memory and Oblivion,* ed. W. Reinink and J. Stumpel (Amsterdam: Kluwer, 1999), 89–94; and Michael Steinberg, "Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture," 59–109. Also of interest in this regard is Claudia Naber, "'. . . die Fackel deutsche-jüdischer Gesitigkeit weitertragen': Der Hamburger Kreis um Ernst Cassirer und Aby Warburg," in *Die Juden in Hamburg 1590 bis 1990: Wissenschaftliche Beiträge der Universität Hamburg zur Ausstellung "Vierhundert Jahre Juden in Hamburg,"* ed. Arno Herzig and Saskia Rohde (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz, 1991), 393–406. As Gombrich rightly remarks, Warburg considered the formation of his library "an instrument of enlightenment, a weapon in the struggle against the powers of darkness which could so easily overwhelm the precarious achievement of rationality." Gombrich, *Aby Warburg,* 13.

33. Arnaldo Momigliano, "Hermann Usener," in *New Paths of Classicism in the Nineteenth Century* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1982), 45. Usener's 1905 essay, "Zeus Keraunos," is reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften IV: Arbeiten zur Religionsgeschichte,* ed. R. Wünsch (Osnabrück: Zeller, 1912), 471–497.

34. Momigliano, "Hermann Usener," 45. See also Jan Bremmer, "Hermann Usener," *Classical Scholarship: A Biographical Encyclopedia,* ed. Ward W. Briggs and William M. Calder III (New York: Garland, 1999), 470; and Roland Kany, *Mnemosyne als Programm: Geschichte, Erinnerung und die Andacht zum Unbedeutenden im Werk von Usener, Warburg und Benjamin* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1987), 11–128.

35. This idea is more thoroughly addressed in Hermann Usener, *Götternamen: Versuch einer Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung* (Bonn: F. Cohen, 1896).

36. "In dem Masse als die Sinneseindrücke schwächer werden, gewinnt unser logisches Denken die Oberhand." Cited in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg,* 30.

37. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg,* 28, citing Warburg's notes of the first lecture by Usener. As Kurt Forster persuasively argues, even "the personal resonance that Usener sought to find in his objects of study recurs in Warburg and counters the tendency to academic scientization. For all his use of historical and philological learning, Usener made one disarming confession: 'All study of myth, unless it is no more than a game, will ultimately bring us back, in spite of ourselves, to what most intimately concerns us—our own religion—and will further our understanding for that.'" Kurt Forster, introduction to Warburg, *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity,* 7. Here Forster cites Herman Usener, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 8 (1905): x.

38. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg,* 28–29. "Pagan survivals" are also a subject of Edward Tylor's *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom,* 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1873), the first volume of which was translated into German in 1873.

39. See Robert Ackerman, *The Myth and Ritual School: J. G. Frazer and the Cambridge Rit-*

*ualists* (New York: Garland, 1991); Walter Burkert, "Grieschische Mythologie und die Geistesgeschichte der Moderne," *Les études classiques aux xixe et xxe siècles: leur place dans l'histoire des idées* (Geneva: Vandoeuvres, 1979), 159–199; William M. Calder, ed., *The Cambridge Ritualists Reconsidered* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991); Sally Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1978); and George Stocking Jr., "The Ethnographer's Magic: Fieldwork in British Anthropology from Tylor to Malinowski," in *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork,* ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 70–120.

40. R. R. Marett, ed., *Anthropology and the Classics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908), 3–6.

41. Hermann Usener, "Heilige Handlung" [1904], reprinted in his *Kleine Schriften,* 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1912–13), 4:422–467, quote at page 425. Cited in Burke, "History and Anthropology in 1900," 26. In the German context see also K. T. Preuss, "Der Unterbau des Dramas," *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg, 1927–1928* (Leipzig, 1930): 1–88.

42. Kathryn Brush, "Aby Warburg and the Cultural Historian Karl Lamprecht," in *Art History as Cultural History: Warburg's Projects,* ed. Richard Woodfield (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2001), 67. Lamprecht was inspired by Wilhelm Wundt's comparative studies. At the time he was writing, his approach was hardly anomalous: *The Golden Bough,* James Frazer's influential twelve-volume study of the use and development of magic, ritual, and myth, began to appear in 1890.

43. Karl Lamprecht, *Initial-Ornamentik des VIII. bis XIII. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig: Alphons Dürr, 1882).

44. Brush, "Warburg and Lamprecht," 75 and 73. See also Brush, "The Cultural Historian Karl Lamprecht: Practitioner and Progenitor of Art History," *Central European History* 26 (1993): 139–164; and *The Shaping of Art History: Wilhelm Vöge, Adolph Goldschmidt, and the Study of Medieval Art* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Forster, introduction to Warburg, *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity,* 7–10; and Gombrich, *Aby Warburg,* 30–37. On Lamprecht's historical method and its reception see Roger Chickering, *Karl Lamprecht: A German Academic Life (1865–1915)* (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press International, 1993).

45. Aby Warburg, *Sandro Botticellis "Geburt der Venus" und "Frühling": Eine Untersuchung über die Vorstellungen von der Antike in der italianischen Frührenaissance* (1893). Using the word "Vorstellungen" in his title, Warburg indicates that his examination of images will be linked to the study of the ideas expressed by those images, including the ideas of the society under which they were produced. Warburg's dissertation and his 1892 essay on the Florentine court festivals of 1589 appear in English translation in Warburg, *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity,* 89–156 and 349–401, respectively. See also Philippe-Alain Michaud, "Florence in New Mexico: The Intermezzi of 1589 in the Light of Indian Rituals," in *Photographs at the Frontier,* 53–63.

46. Charlotte Schoell-Glass, "Archive's Silent Record," 90. See for instance Warburg's essay of 1902, "The Art of Portraiture and the Florentine Bourgeoisie," and of 1912, "Italian Art and International Astrology in the Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara," in *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity,* 184–221, 435–450; 562–591, 732–758.

47. Heinrich Dilly, "Sokrates in Hamburg: Aby Warburg und seine kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek," in Bredekamp, Diers, and Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg: Akten des internationalen Symposiums Hamburg 1990,* 131–133.

48. Warburg's term "*Nachleben*" connotes the survival, revival, and potency of the classical past. Warburg considered not only the survival of "primitive" forms of expression and superstition but also the revival of the potency of symbolic forms for later ages.

49. Paul's marriage not only solidified the relations of two powerful banking families but it also brought Aby a friend in James Loeb, Nina's brother, who went on to found the Loeb Classical Library. On Warburg's American relations see Raulff, "Nachwort," 66. On the history of the Warburg bankers of Hamburg see Eduard Rosenbaum, "M. M. Warburg & Co. Merchant Bankers of Hamburg. A Survey of the First 140 Years, 1798 to 1938," *Yearbook* (Leo Baeck Institute) 7 (1962): 121–149; and Alfred Vagts, "M. M. Warburg & Co.: Ein Bankhaus in der deutschen Weltpolitik 1905–1933," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 45, no. 3 (1958): 289–388. Also of interest is the article by Hans Tramer, "Die Hamburger Kaiserjuden," *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Institute,* no. 11 (September 1960): 177–189.

50. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg,* 88–89; translation modified. Focusing on the ceramics

Warburg gathered on his journey, Salvatore Settis demonstrates how Warburg's trip to the Southwest corresponded to his desire to see "art in *statu nascendi*," to consider "art without the art historian." Settis, "Kunstgeschichte als vergleichende Kulturwissenschaft," 146.

51. Michaud, "Un Pueblo à Hambourg," 45.

52. Saxl, "Warburgs Besuch," 318. Insofar as he diligently applied himself to the etymological and anthropological study of Hopi languages and customs, the working notes Warburg compiled during his stay in America indicate the influence of Lamprecht (London, WIA, 46.1–6). On this point see also Kurt Forster, "Aby Warburg: His Study of Ritual and Art on Two Continents," *October* 77 (Summer 1996): 5–24.

53. Cited in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 88. In terms of Warburg's own romanticizing of what he called "prehistoric and 'wild' America," it should be noted that he was acquainted with James Fenimore Cooper's popular Leatherstocking tales of the 1880s, which romanticize Native Americans according to the mythos of the time.

54. In August 1895 Warburg also "solicited the names of scholarly American scholarly contacts from Lamprecht" (Brush, "Warburg and Lamprecht," 77).

55. Naber, "Pompeji in New-Mexico," 89.

56. Cestelli Guidi, "Retracing Aby Warburg's American Journey," in *Photographs at the Frontier*, 30. Cestelli Guidi notes in addition that "Warburg filled up entire notebooks with Indian vocabularies and bought the second edition of J. Powell, *Introduction to the Study of the Indian Languages*, Washington 1880" (31 n. 14).

57. Fritz Saxl recounts that when Warburg died on October 26, 1929, he was anticipating the meeting of the 24th Congress of American Anthropology. Repaying an old debt to the American anthropologists he had met on his trip, he offered the Warburg Library as a venue for the Congress. Saxl, "Warburgs Besuch," 317.

58. Raulff, "Nachwort," 67–68. Raulff reminds us that the battle of Wounded Knee occurred in 1890, the year Mooney's book was published. After he returned to Europe Warburg bought "almost all the available texts on the snake dance, still to be found in the Library of the Warburg Institute. Apart from Fewkes's and Voth's studies he also bought a popular book by W[alter] Hough, *The Moki Snake Dance*, published by the Passenger Department of the Santa Fe Railroad." Cestelli Guidi, "Retracing Warburg's American Journey," 42 n. 53.

59. In his 1923 lecture Warburg cites Jesse Walter Fewkes, who had contributed a long article on the snake ceremonial of the Hopi in the 1894/1895 and 1897/98 reports of the Bureau of American Ethnology. Also of note is Frank Hamilton Cushing's "Outline of the Zuñi Creation Myths," in 13th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1891/92 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), 325–447. For a general history see George Brown Goode, ed., *The Smithsonian Institution 1846–1896: The History of Its First Half Century* (City of Washington, 1897), especially the sections entitled "Bureau of American Ethnology," by W. J. McGee, and "Anthropology," by Jesse Walter Fewkes; as well as Curtis Hinsley Jr., *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846–1910* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1981). Also of interest is Curtis Hinsley, "Ethnographic Charisma and Scientific Routine: Cushing and Fewkes in the American Southwest, 1879–1893" in Stocking, *Observers Observed*, 53–69; and Eliza McFeely, "A Place of Grace: Frank Hamilton Cushing," in *Zuni and the American Imagination* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 75–110.

60. Aby Warburg, draft of the 1928 lecture, cited in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, 88.

61. Incidentally—but perhaps not surprisingly—in the same year as Nordenskiöld's book was published in Sweden, the artifacts that Wetherill had collected at the site were displayed in a fake cliff dwelling along the midway at the Chicago World's Fair. See the brief description of this in Evan Connell, "Mesa Verde," in *Perpetual Mirage: Photographic Narratives of the Desert West*, ed. Whitney Museum of American Art (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), 80. On the Wetherills see Frances Gillmor and Louisa Wade Wetherill, *Traders to the Navajo: The Story of the Wetherills of Kayenta* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1934).

62. As a "German scientist" and "man of means," Warburg used his contacts to secure free train travel from the president of the Mexican Central Railway Company. Naber, "Pompeji in New-Mexico," 91.

63. Aby Warburg to his parents and siblings, Santa Fe, December 14, 1895 (unpublished). Cited in Naber, "Pompeji in Neu-Mexico," 92.

64. Naber, "Pompeji in Neu-Mexico," 92.

65. During his journey Warburg took notes and photographs. He also gathered approximately 120 vases and ritual objects, which he donated to the Hamburg Museum für Völkerkunde. See K. Hagen, "Bericht über die Schenkung der Sammlung von Dr. A. Warburg an das Museum für Völkerkunde," *Jahrbuch der Hamburgischen Wissenschaftlichen Anstalten* 20 (1902): cx–cxvii.

66. Naber, "Pompeji in Neu-Mexico," 92.

67. Consider Warburg's diary entry of January 23: "Trip to S. Ildefonso. . . . In buckboards over the mountains. Combined stag, antelope and buffalo dance. . . . Picnic in Mexican house. Permission (in dollars) from governor to take photographs. It was very picturesque. On the way back we sang in the train compartment." Cited in Cestelli Guidi and Mann, *Photographs at the Frontier,* 153; trans. Dorothea McEwan. For recent scholarly criticism of such practices and the issues they raise see James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Farago, "Silent Moves"; Ruth Phillips and Christopher Steiner, eds., *Unpacking Culture: Art and Commodity in Colonial and Postcolonial Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); and the important volume of essays edited by George Stocking Jr., *Objects and Others.*

68. According to Naber the German-American literature professor Julius Goebel introduced Warburg to Barnes. On his visit to Stanford University Warburg had "stimulating conversations with Goebel on Hegel and Friedrich Theodor Vischer" ("Pompeji in Neu-Mexico," 94). On the results of Barnes's creativity experiments see "The Art of Little Children," *Pedagogical Seminary* 3 (1895): 302–307.

69. Cestelli Guidi, "Retracing Warburg's American Journey," 29. Cestelli Guidi continues: "In the region then known as Tuyasan, external cultural influences, religious or economic, had not yet completely disrupted native traditions. The cultural resistance of Zuñi and Hopi Indians—both of Pueblo stock—to Western civilization, and the preservation of native traditions, had been a boon for fieldwork organized by the Smithsonian Institution in the years immediately prior to Warburg's arrival" (29–30). On this point see also Armin Geertz, "Pueblo Cultural History," in Cestelli Guidi and Mann, *Photographs at the Frontier,* 8–19; and Warburg, "Images," 20. Insofar as the railroad precipitated a transformation of native arts and culture, Warburg was right to want to penetrate beyond the lines. As Edwin Wade puts it, "No other influence, neither traders nor dealers nor scholars, would so broadly promote and transform Indian art as did the railroads and their tourist bureaus." Edwin Wade, "The Ethnic Art Market in the Southwest, 1880–1980," in Stocking, *Objects and Others,* 169–170.

70. Warburg, "Images," 51. "The drawings were shown at the exhibition *Das Kind als Künstler,* Hamburg 1898 . . . , and then given to the Völkerkunde Museum in Hamburg, where they appeared to have been lost since 1924." Cestelli Guidi, "Retracing Warburg's American Journey," 38 n. 35.

71. See the exhibition catalogue *Der Struwwelpeter: Entstehung eines berühmten deutschen Kinderbuchs; eine Ausstellung des Arbeitskreises "Burger gestalten ihr Museum"* (Frankfurt am Main: Heinrich Hoffmann Museum, 1983); and the recent study by Anita Eckstaedt, *"Der Struwwelpeter" Dichtung und Deutung: eine psychoanalytische Studie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998).

72. Warburg, "Images," 10. On the Hopi altar as "the centripetal focal point for man and god alike" see Armin Geertz, *Hopi Indian Altar Iconography* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987). Kurt Forster likens the impulse at the heart of the medicine bowl altar of the Hopi Indians, which represents "the cosmic forces that preside over Hopi life and destiny," to the "ordering principle" used by Warburg to arrange (and rearrange) the books in his library. Forster, "Aby Warburg," 9–12.

73. Warburg, "Images," 2; translation modified.

74. "Thanks to Voth's influential position in the Oraibi pueblo, Warburg was able to enter the *kiva*—the sacred underground chamber in Anasazi culture—on the eve of the dance, which he then watched along with Voth. This missionary explained to him the phases of the ritual and the symbolic meanings of the costumes worn by the *kachina* dancers" (Cestelli Guidi, "Retracing Warburg's American Journey," 41). As for Warburg's well-known

photographs of the dance, Cestelli Guidi points out that "Warburg followed to the letter Voth's suggestions about what aspects of the dance he should photograph, and how he should do so; he might even have given Voth his camera to ensure that the images matched the standard of contemporary ethnographic photography" (45). On Heinrich Voth see Fred Eggan, "H. R. Voth, Ethnologist," in Barton Wright, *Hopi Material Cuture: Artifacts Gathered by H. R. Voth in the Fred Harvey Collection* (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Northland Press and the Heard Museum, 1979), 1–7.

75. Warburg, "Images," 21, 16; translation modified.

76. Ibid., 6.

77. Ibid., 17, 1, 2.

78. Friedrich Theodor Vischer, "Das Symbol," in *Philosophische Aufsätze: Eduard Zeller zu seinem fünfzigjährigen Doctor-Jubiläum gewidmet* (Leipzig: Fues's Verlag, 1887), 151–193. The heavy underlining and manifold annotation in Warburg's copy (Warburg Institute Library, London) demonstrate that he read Vischer's essay carefully and pondered it considerably. On Warburg's relation to Vischer's theory of the symbol see especially Bernhard Buschendorf, "Zur Begründung der Kulturwissenschaft: Der Symbolbegriff bei Friedrich Theodor Vischer, Aby Warburg und Edgar Wind," in *Edgar Wind: Kunsthistoriker und Philosoph,* ed. Horst Bredekamp et. al. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), 227–248; and Wind, "Warburg's Concept of *Kulturwissenschaft.*"

79. Vischer, "Das Symbol," 154.

80. Wind, "Warburg's Concept of *Kulturwissenschaft,*" 28; Wind quotes Vischer, "Das Symbol," 167.

81. Buschendorf, "Zur Begründung der Kulturwissenschaft," 231. My thinking on the relation of Vischer and Warburg's theories of the symbol is inspired by Buschendorf's excellent essays. While a detailed consideration lies beyond the scope of this chapter, it should be noted that Vischer's notion of empathy had a decisive impact on Warburg. In several recent publications Georges Didi-Huberman considers Warburg's theory of the symbol in relation to Freudian psychology. Georges Didi-Huberman, "*Dialektik des Monstrums:* Aby Warburg and the Symptom Paradigm," *Art History* 24, no. 5 (November 2001): 621–645; and *L'image survivante: histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg* (Paris: Éditions de minuit, 2002). Translating Warburg's psychology of human expression into Freudian terms, Didi-Huberman presents Warburg's theory as a cluster of psychic symptoms. I would argue that this approach not only relies too heavily on the pathological but also ignores that Warburg was concerned less with the (defense) mechanisms of the psyche than with emotional affective responses to the world. These include what I am referring to as the desire to transform chaos into cosmos as well as Warburg's understanding that the search for order exists alongside chaotic, disorganizing forces. Warburg's theory of the polarity of the symbol, I argue, captures the perpetual rhythm of these opposing forces, just as it demonstrates why symbols are shot through with an inherent tension. In contrast to this recent emphasis on the "irrational" side of Warburg's theory, Christiane Brosius rightly demonstrates the importance of Kantian philosophy for Warburg's concept of self-cultivation (*Bildung*). Christiane Brosius, *Kunst als Denkraum: Zum Bildungsbegriff von Aby Warburg* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1997).

82. In 1896 Warburg titled his notebook of aphorisms "Grundlegende Bruchstücke zur Psychologie der Kunst" (Fundamental Fragments for a Psychological Philosophy of Art) (WIA, III, nos. 43–45, 1888–1905). The original title Warburg chose for his aphorisms, "Grundlegende Bruchstücke zu einer monistischen Kunstpyschologie" (Fundamental Fragments for a Monistic Psychology of Art), indicates that his theory of art would be based on a fundamental psychological principle. Warburg subsequently changed the title of his notebook to "Grundlegende Bruchstücke zu einer pragmatischen Ausdruckskunde" (Fundamental Fragments for a Pragmatic Knowledge of Expression), thereby demonstrating the central role of expression for his theory of images. A publication of Warburg's aphorisms is in preparation: Aby Warburg, *Fragments zur Ausdruckskunde,* ed. Bernard Buschendorf and Claudia Naber, in *Gesammelte Schriften,* ed. Horst Bredekamp et al. (Berlin).

83. Wind, "Warburg's Concept of *Kulturwissenschaft,*" 25.

84. WIA, III.45.1.

85. WIA, II.45.1, p. 39. See also Warburg's notes for his four theses ("Vier Thesen"),

WIA, 39.3.1, and his remarks of April 1924, "Schicksalsmächte im Spiegel antikisierender Symbolik," WIA, 93.5.

86. Wind, "Warburg's Concept of *Kulturwissenschaft*," 28–29. The influence of Warburg's ideas on Wind's art history is traced in Berhard Buschendorf, "'War ein sehr tüchtiges gegenseitiges Fördern': Edgar Wind und Aby Warburg," *Idea: Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunsthalle* 4 (1985): 164–209.

87. "Symbolismus aufgefasst als primäre Umfangsbestimmung," 2.

88. Warburg was not alone in exploring a psychology of collective memory. Ewald Hering and Richard Semon had investigated this, and Warburg was acquainted with their publications: Ewald Hering, "Über das Gedächtnis als seine allgemeine Funktion der organisierten Materie" [1870], in *Fünf Reden* (Leipzig: Verlag von Wilhelm Engelmann, 1921), 31; and Richard Semon, *Die mnemischen Empfindungen in ihren Beziehungen zu den Originalempfindungen* (Leipzig: W. Engelmann, 1909).

89. WIA, II.45.1, p. 2.

90. Aby Warburg, "Pagan-Antique Prophecy in Words and Images in the Age of Luther," in *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 588–599. Warburg also employs the idea of being "grafted onto a single stem" in his 1928 lecture (Warburg, "Images," 34).

91. Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 103.

92. Warburg, "Images," 4.

93. Ernst Cassirer, "Der Begriff der symbolischen Form im Aufbau der Geisteswissenschaften," "Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg" 1921–22, in *Wesen und Wirkung des Symbolbegriffs* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1959), 171. Saxl recounts that in developing the "systematic ideas" of the first volume of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Cassirer "studied the voluminous concrete material prepared by ethnologists and historians. Warburg had collected the very material which Cassirer needed. More than that: looking back now it seems miraculous that Warburg had collected it for thirty years with a view to the very same problems which Cassirer was then beginning to investigate" (Saxl, "Ernst Cassirer," 48).

94. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, trans. Ralph Manheim, vol. 1, *Language;* vol. 2, *Mythical Thought;* vol. 3, *The Phenomenology of Knowledge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955–57).

95. Ernst Cassirer, "Die Begriffsform im mythischen Denken," in *Wesen und Wirkung des Symbolbegriffs*, 5; originally published as "Studien der Bibliothek Warburg," no. 1, ed. Fritz Saxl (Leipzig: B. G. Tuebner, 1922). See also Ernst Cassirer, *Einstein's Theory of Relativity;* and his essay "Mythic, Aesthetic and Theoretical Space," trans. Donald Phillip Verene and Lerke Holzwarth Foster, *Man and World* 2, no. 1 (1969): 3–17; originally published in the proceedings of the *Vierter Kongress für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* (Stuttgart: H. Noack, 1931).

96. WIA, GC, F. Saxl to A. Warburg, December 5, 1921; 8 December 1921; and April 13, 1922; WIA, GC, E. Cassirer to F. Saxl, March 24, 1923; WIA, GC, E. Cassirer to A. Warburg, June 15, 1923.

97. See Cassirer, "Der Begriff der symbolischen Form," 171–174.

98. See for instance Cassirer's critique of Hegel in his essay "Die Begriffsform im mythischen Denken," 6.

99. Ibid., 9–10. See also Cassirer, "Mythic, Aesthetic and Theoretical Space," 9; and *Language and Myth*, trans. Susanne Langer (New York: Dover, 1946); originally published as "Studien der Bibliothek Warburg," no. 6, ed. Fritz Saxl (Leipzig: B. G. Tuebner, 1925).

100. Cassirer, "Der Begriff der symbolischen Form," 178.

101. Cassirer, "Mythic, Aesthetic and Theoretical Space," 9. On Cassirer's concept of ordering see Christiane Schmitz-Rigal, "Epistemologie des Zeitlichen: Wissen als offener Ordnungs- und Orientierungsprozess," in *Die Kunst offenen Wissens: Ernst Cassirers Epistemologie und Deutung der modernen Physik* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2002), 85–183.

102. See Ernst Cassirer, "Das Symbolproblem und seine Stellung im System der Philosophie," in *Symbol, Technik, Sprache: Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1927–1933*, ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth and John Michael Krois (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1985), 7–11; originally published in *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 21 (1927): 295–322; and

Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms,* vol. 4, *The Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms,* ed. John Michael Krois and Donald Phillip Verene, trans. John Michael Krois (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 50–51. On this idea in relation to aesthetic phenomena see Cassirer, "Der Begriff der Symbolischen Form," 178. Joining viewpoint and content, as well as spirit and life, in his conception of the symbolic form, Cassirer levels a critique against contemporary philosophers of life, such as Wilhelm Dilthey, who conceive of life and spirit separately. According to Cassirer, these philosophers offer no trusty philosophical mediation between life and spirit. On Cassirer's response to Dilthey's philosophy see Rudolf Makkreel, "Cassirer zwischen Kant und Dilthey," in *Ernst Cassirers Werk und Wirkung: Kultur und Philosophie,* ed. Dorothea Frede and Reinold Schmücker (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), 145–162; and Josef Maria Werle, "Ernst Cassirers nachgelassense Aufzeichnungen über 'Leben' und 'Geist'—zur Kritik der Philosophie der Gegenwart," in *Über Ernst Cassirers Philosophie der symbolischen Formen,* ed. Hans-Jürgen Braun, Helmut Holzhey, and Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988), 274–289.

103. Cassirer, "Der Begriff der symbolischen Form," 183; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "Simple Imitation, Manner, Style," trans. Ellen von Nardroff and Ernest von Nardroff, in *Goethe: Essays on Art and Literature,* ed. John Gearey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 72. Warburg was undoubtedly acquainted with this essay: The Warburg Library contains several editions of Goethe's collected works, and on the title page of the *Jubiläums-Ausgabe* there is an "x" in pencil next to this essay.

104. This distance is implied in Goethe's definition of "symbolic objects." Because these objects encompass a "certain totality," they "lay claim to a certain unity and universality from the outside and the inside." See Goethe's letter to Schiller, August 16, 1797, in *Correspondence between Goethe and Schiller 1794–1805,* trans. Liselotte Dieckmann (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 208–210.

105. Cassirer, "Der Begriff der symbolischen Form," 183–184.

106. Although a more detailed examination of Goethe's writings on the polarity of the symbol will not be explored here, I would like to note that his conception of polarity frames the interrelation of objectivity and subjectivity in his scientific studies as well as the evocations of "repeating reflections" in his poetry.

107. Cassirer, "Der Begriff der symbolischen Form," 193.

108. Ibid., 187.

109. During the preparation for his lecture, Warburg wrote to Saxl that Cassirer's essay on symbolism taught him "a great deal." WIA, GC, A. Warburg to F. Saxl, February 1, 1923.

110. For an account of Warburg's lecture of March 16, 1897, to the "Freien photographischen Vereinigung zu Berlin" see the report by Franz Goerke in *Photographische Rundschau* 11 (1897): 61.

111. Warburg's account of the snake dance draws from the publications of Jesse Walter Fewkes. In 1891 Fewkes assisted in a snake dance in the pueblo of Walpi. See Warburg's annotations to an essay by Fewkes of 1891 (WIA, 040/020635); as well as the very detailed account by Fewkes in the *Journal of American Ethnology and Archeology* 14 (1894); see note 59 above. By the 1920s the snake dance had become a tourist attraction, replete with its stock in trade of photographs of a Native American with a snake in his mouth. As Michaud rightly remarks, "The contemplativeness of the Native American ceremony was replaced by the false violence of images recycled in a folkloric spectacle. The ceremonies photographed at the end of the nineteenth century by Voth and George Wharton James show the dancers enveloped in the aura made by their movements, which make them even less clearly visible: the clarity of the snapshots taken in the 1920s, and the frontal pose of the models, mark the irreparable disappearance of the very thing they claimed to preserve." Michaud, *Aby Warburg and the Image in Motion,* 225.

112. Warburg, "Images," 35.

113. Ibid., 38–39. On the sculpted Laocoön group and the problem of interpretation see Richard Brilliant, *My Laocoon: Alternative Claims in the Interpretation of Artworks* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

114. "We can see here, hieroglyphically indicated, ritual acts from the cult of Kos in thirty sections, all identical to the crude, magical desire of the Indians to enter the realm of

the serpent. We see the rite of incubation and the serpent as it is carried by human hands and worshipped as a deity of the springs" (Warburg, "Images," 42–43).

115. Ibid., 44.

116. Saxl, "Ernst Cassirer," 49–50. On the visit see, in addition to Saxl, Toni Bondy Cassirer, *Mein Leben mit Ernst Cassirer* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1981).

117. WIA, FC, A. Warburg to Paul and Felix Warburg, May 11, 1926. Alluding to the affinities in their approach to the symbolic form, Warburg reports that Cassirer's lecture in the new library building means that "my research field has donated its own 'instrument' to the public at large." WIA, GC, A. Warburg to Heinsheimer, May 6, 1926.

118. Warburg, "Images," 1, 52, 54.

119. Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955).

120. WIA, GC, F. Saxl to E. Cassirer, July 15, 1921; WIA, GC, F. Saxl to A. Warburg, December 8, 1921, and May 7, 1923; WIA, GC, E. Cassirer to F. Saxl, March 24, 1923; WIA, FC, A. Warburg to M. Warburg, April 16, 1924. See also WIA, GC, A. Warburg to F. Boas, December 13, 1924; WIA, GC, A. Warburg to W. Niemeyer, September 1, 1925. Despite affinities in their ideas of the symbolic form, Saxl writes that unlike Warburg, Cassirer "lacks knowledge of the aesthetic sphere as the middle point between transcendence and reality" (WIA, GC, F. Saxl to A. Warburg, March 4, 1924). A tendency toward ever-increasing systematicity figures Cassirer's three-volume study, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms.* For Jürgen Habermas, Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms is an outline of the civilizing process. Jürgen Habermas, "The Liberating Power of Symbols: Ernst Cassirer's Humanistic Legacy and the Warburg Library," in *The Liberating Power of Symbols: Philosophical Essays,* trans. Peter Dews (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2001), 1–29.

121. Forster, introduction to Warburg, *Renewal of Pagan Antiquity,* 44.

122. On January 19, 1929, Warburg introduced "Mnemosyne," as he entitled his picture atlas, at the Hertziana Library (Rome) in the context of a lecture on the persistence of antiquity. While his central thesis was misunderstood by many in the audience, his lecture made an impression on Kenneth Clark, who went so far as to claim that it changed his life. Inspired by his approach, Clark decided not to accept the offer of Bernard Berenson, the premier connoisseur of Italian Renaissance art, to work as his assistant in Florence. Frank Zöllner, "Der gerettete Apfelbaum: Über Aby Warburg," in Bredekamp, Diers, and Schoell-Glass, *Aby Warburg: Akten des internationalen Symposiums Hamburg 1990,* 73. Berenson's connoisseurship and issues of objectivity are explored in my conclusion.

123. Cassirer, *The Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms,* 49–50.

124. Cassirer, *The Logic of the Cultural Sciences,* 126.

125. On this point see Thora Ilin Bayer, *Cassirer's Metaphysics of Symbolic Forms: A Philosophical Commentary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 100–102.

## 4. The Experience of Time and the Time of History

1. Alois Riegl, "Late Roman or Oriental?" trans. Peter Wortsman, in *German Essays on Art History,* ed. Gert Schiff (New York: Continuum, 1988), 188–189. See also Alois Riegl, "Über antike und moderne Kunstfreunde" [1904], in *Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Augsburg: Benno Filser Verlag, 1929), 194–206.

2. Diana Graham Reynolds provides the first examination of Riegl's involvement with the Reading Society at the University of Vienna. Riegl was a member of the group from 1875 to 1878, during which time he served as a club secretary, librarian, and member of the steering committee. "Riegl's activities with the *Leseverein* locate him within a unique reception of the philosophy of Schopenhauer and early Nietzsche in the 1870s. . . . Throughout the middle years of the 1870s, and especially after 1876—the period of Riegl's active membership—members of the Society read and discussed Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* and the first three [of his] *Untimely Meditations.*" Diana Graham Reynolds, "Alois Riegl and the Politics of Art History: Intellectual Traditions and Austrian Identity in *Fin-de-Siècle* Vienna" (Ph.D. diss., University of California–San Diego, 1997), 28. On the history and principles of the Leseverein, including the reception of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche by this group, see William McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 17–83. In keeping with the politics of the Leseverein, Riegl advocated for an integrated empire, and therefore an international outlook, against Bismarck's champi-

oning of a "small" Germany and German nationalism. In his scholarship Riegl likewise emphasized unity, community, and the salutary effects of cross-cultural contact: "In each of the periods which he studied, he singled out specifically the desire for unity within a recognition of separateness, and an argument could be made that his formal theory, with its political analogues, and his theory of monuments, with its hope for a coming age of international brotherhood, also contributed to this endeavor." Margaret Olin, "Alois Riegl: The Late Roman Empire in the Late Habsburg Empire," in *The Habsburg Legacy: National Identity in Historical Perspective,* ed. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms, *Austrian Studies* 5 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), 116. On Riegl's academic training see the detailed discussion in Margaret Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 3–7; and Wolfgang Kemp, introduction to *The Group Portraiture of Holland,* by Alois Riegl (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 1–57.

3. See Riegl's remarks in "Late Roman or Oriental?" 174–175.

4. See John McCole, "Benjamin and the Idea of Youth," in *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 35–70.

5. Walter Benjamin, N11,4, in *The Arcades Project,* trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 476. See also Walter Benjamin, "Literary History and the Study of Literature," trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* vol. 2, *1927–1934,* ed. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 459–465.

6. Michael Jennings, *Dialectical Images: Walter Benjamin's Theory of Literary Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 49. Gershom Scholem recounts that in 1918–19 Benjamin "talked a lot about Nietzsche in his final period. . . . According to him, Nietzsche was the only person who had seen historical experience in the nineteenth century, a time when people 'experienced' only nature." Gershom Scholem, *Walter Benjamin: The Story of a Friendship,* trans. Harry Zohn (New York: New York Review Books, 2003), 75.

7. The German historian Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886) is credited with the concept and writing of history that aims to understand the past "as it really was," an approach that is predicated on the highest degree of objectivity. This chapter's epigraph from Benjamin suggests that he was more than disenchanted with Ranke and the scientific historical method associated with him. For a brief overview of Ranke's method and aims, see Peter Burke, "Overture: The New New History, Its Past and Its Future," in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing,* ed. Peter Burke (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 1–8.

8. Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," trans. Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* vol. 4, *1938–1940,* ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 319.

9. On nineteenth-century German historical science see Daniel Fulda, *Wissenschaft aus Kunst: Die Entstehung der modernen deutschen Geschichtsschreibung 1760–1869* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1996); Georg Iggers, *The German Conception of History: The National Tradition of Historical Thought from Herder to the Present* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1968); Michael MacLean, "History in a Two Cultures World: The Case of the German Historians," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49, no. 3 (July–September 1988): 473–494; and Herbert Schnädelbach, *Philosophy in Germany 1831–1933,* trans. Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 33–65. The protocols and pitfalls of objectivity are examined in my conclusion.

10. Paul Valéry, "La Conquête de l'ubiquité," in *Oeuvres II,* ed. Jean Hytier (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 1284. These lines by Valéry serve as the motto to Benjamin's essay of 1936, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility."

11. Works of art, Benjamin writes, "possess nothing that links them extensively and essentially; they have nothing comparable to the hereditary relationships between successive generations which supply the extensive and essential connections in the history of nations. The essential links between works of art remain intensive." Akin to philosophical systems, the "specific historicity of works of art is likewise one that can be unlocked only in interpretations, not in 'art history.'" Walter Benjamin, "Letter to Florens Christian Rang," trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* vol. 1, *1913–1926,* ed. Mar-

cus Bullock and Michael Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 388–389. In a fragment written between 1897 and 1899, Riegl remarks: "Aesthetics. Relation of parts to the whole. Relation of parts among themselves. Has not taken the relation to the beholder into consideration. The relation to the beholder constitutes *art history.* Its general principles make up historical aesthetics." Cited in Olin, *Forms of Representation,* 224 n. 4.

12. Wolfgang Kemp and Henri Zerner have suggested but not developed the connection between Riegl's age value and Benjamin's aura. Kemp, "Fernbilder: Benjamin und die Kunstwissenschaft," in *Links hatte sich noch alles zu enträtseln: Walter Benjamin im Kontext,* ed. Burkhardt Lindner (Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat Verlag, 1978), 224–257; and Henri Zerner, "Aloïs Riegl: Art, Value, and Historicism," *Daedalus* 105, no. 1 (1976): 177–188. Wolfgang Kemp draws out this connection a bit further in "Benjamin e il culto dei monumenti di Riegl," in *Alois Riegl: teoria e prassi della conservazione dei monumenti,* ed. Sandro Scarrocchia (Bologna: Accademia Clementina, 1995), 417–419.

13. Walter Benjamin, "Curriculum Vitae (III)," trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 2:78. See also Walter Benjamin, "Eduard Fuchs, Collector and Historian," trans. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings, on the basis of a prior translation by Knut Tarnowski, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* vol. 3, *1935–1938,* ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 260–302.

14. See the concluding sentences of Walter Benjamin's review of 1933, "Rigorous Study of Art: On the First Volume of *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen,*" trans. Thomas Levin, *October* 47 (Winter 1988): 90.

15. Benjamin, "Curriculum Vitae (III)," 78.

16. Walter Benjamin, "Experience and Poverty," in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 2:731–732.

17. Benjamin, N3,1, in *Arcades Project,* 462–463.

18. Benjamin writes about this division of experience in his earliest essays. As his short piece "Experience" (1913) and his more developed essay "The Metaphysics of Youth" (1913–14) attest, he initially conceived of this division as a generational one between philistines and youth. Contrary to the "empty time"—"calendar time, clock time, and stock-exchange time"—and the "spiritless experience" of their elders, youth, according to Benjamin, harbored within themselves the experience of spirit (*Geist*), the "intimation of immortal time," and along with it the enduring hope for personal meaning and societal change. Walter Benjamin, "Experience," trans. Lloyd Spencer and Stefan Jost; and "The Metaphysics of Youth," trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 1:3–17.

19. Benjamin, "Experience and Poverty," 732. On Benjamin's critique of historicism see Jeanne-Marie Gagnebin, *Zur Geschichtsphilosophie Walter Benjamins: Die Unabgeschlossenheit des Sinnes* (Erlangen: Palm und Enke, 1978), 69–74; Heinz-Dieter Kittsteiner, "Walter Benjamin's Historicism," *New German Critique* 39 (1986): 179–215; Gérard Raulet, "Benjamins Historismus-Kritik," in *Walter Benjamin, 1892–1940, zum 100. Geburtstag,* ed. Uwe Steiner (Bern: Peter Lang, 1992), 103–122; and Irving Wohlfarth, "Smashing the Kaleidoscope: Walter Benjamin's Critique of Cultural History," in *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History,* ed. Michael Steinberg (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 190–205.

20. Anson Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 47, 7. The phrase "caesura of 1918" comes from Norbert Bolz, *Auszug aus der entzauberten Welt: Philosophischer Extemismus zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1989), 11.

21. On the ways the past is emplotted in historical narratives see Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973); and *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978). See also the important study by Stephen Bann, *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth-Century Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Also of interest is Eric MacPhail, "The Plot of History from Antiquity to the Renaissance," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (January 2001): 1–16.

22. Rabinbach, *Shadow of Catastrophe,* 5. See also Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "The Cae-

sura of the Speculative," *Glyph* 4 (1978): 57–84. To borrow Adorno's memorable phrase, Benjamin did not view the subject "as the animating center of the cosmos." Theodor Adorno, "The Georg-Hofmannstahl Correspondence, 1891–1916," trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber, in *Prisms* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press), 223. Adorno's essay is dedicated in memory of Benjamin.

23. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 97.

24. Benjamin, N1,1, in *Arcades Project,* 456. Benjamin's emphasis on knowledge which comes "only in lightning flashes" is reminiscent of his remarks about the flash of light in early photography. Benjamin is particularly interested in the way the flash disrupts our knowledge of history, or our understanding of the visible world, by bringing to light the intervals between things. On this point see for instance his essay of 1931, "Little History of Photography," trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 2:507–530.

25. "By 'modernity' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and the immutable." Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life" [1863], in *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology,* ed. Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), 23. Though Benjamin criticized the conception of modernity that Baudelaire presented in his essay "The Painter of Modern Life," he celebrated the author's poetry, especially several poems from his *Les fleurs du mal.* According to Benjamin, these poems succeeded in capturing the dialectical relation between the archaic and the modern which he believed defined the character of modernity. I will discuss Baudelaire's poetry below. For Benjamin's critique of "The Painter of Modern Life," see his 1938 essay "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," trans. Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 4:3–92. On why Benjamin might have gotten Baudelaire wrong in this essay see Hans-Robert Jauss, "Reflections on the Chapter 'Modernity' in Benjamin's Baudelaire Fragments," trans. Jim Gussen, in *On Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Recollections,* ed. Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), 176–184.

26. See Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982); Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880–1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983); Reinhart Koselleck, "'Neuzeit': Remarks on the Semantics of the Modern Concept of Movement," in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time,* trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), 231–266; Peter Osborne, "Modernity: A Different Time," in *The Politics of Time: Modernity and the Avant-Garde* (London: Verso, 1995), 1–29; Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: Trains and Train Travel in the 19th Century,* trans. Anselm Hollo (New York: Urizen Books, 1979); and Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" [1902–3], trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel,* ed. Kurt Wolff (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950), 409–424.

27. Peter Osborne, "Small-Scale Victories, Large-Scale Defeats: Walter Benjamin's Politics of Time," in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience,* ed. Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne (London: Routledge, 1994), 83.

28. G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften,* vol. 10 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Theorie Werkausgabe, 1970), 258–283. For my purposes here I am isolating Hegel's terms for memory from the whole of his philosophy. Although I offer merely an impressionistic indication of his terms, I should underline that Hegel's terms for memory are woven into the very fabric of his thought. He indicates in the concluding sections of the *Enzyklopädie* that it is the task of philosophy to remember. These forms of memory are the subject of Benjamin's thought piece "Gedächtnis und Erinnerung" [1932], in Walter Benjamin, *Medienästhetische Schriften,* with an afterword by Detlev Schöttker (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), 22–23.

29. Using archeological metaphors, Benjamin makes a similar point in "Ausgraben und Erinnern" (Excavating and Remembering), one of his occasional "thought figures." Walter Benjamin, "Ausgraben und Erinnern," in *Denkbilder* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), 100–101.

30. "No one knows what an endless abundance of images of the past slumber in interiorizing remembrance. They awaken perchance now and then, but, as they say, one cannot

recall them. So, these images are ours only *in a formal way.*" Hegel, *Enzyklopädie,* 261. The emphasis here is Hegel's.

31. Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 315.

32. Benjamin explains:

> For the important thing to the remembering author is not what he experienced, but the weaving of his memory, the Penelope work of recollection [*Eingedanken*]. Or should one call it, rather, a Penelope work of forgetting? Is not the involuntary recollection, Proust's *mémoire involontaire,* much closer to forgetting than what is usually called memory? . . . For here the day unravels what the night has woven. When we awake each morning, we hold in our hands, usually weakly and loosely, but a few fringes in the carpet of lived existence, as woven into us by forgetting. However, with our purposeful activity and, even more, our purposive remembering, each day unravels the web, the ornaments of forgetting.

Walter Benjamin, "On the Image of Proust," trans. Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 2:238. Harry Zohn observes that "*Eingedanken* is Benjamin's coinage from the preposition *eingedenk* ('mindful of') and the verb *gedanken* ('recollect,' 'remember'). The resultant term has a more active sense than *erinnern* ('remember') and often verges on the notion of commemoration" (*Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 4:354 n. 12.) Benjamin uses *Eingedanken,* which is generally translated as remembrance, to describe the aim of his historical practice. In the concluding section of this chapter I address Benjamin's historical method in relation to the nineteenth-century practice of history and official forms of commemoration.

33. Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 331.

34. In this sense, Benjamin also calls authentic experience (*Erfahrung*) "long experience" in order to distinguish it from isolated experience (*Erlebnis*). As long experience "accompanies one to the far reaches of time," it brings the individual into contact with tradition: "Where there is experience [*Erfahrung*] in the strict sense of the word, certain contents of the individual past combine in the memory [*Gedächtnis*] with material from the collected past." Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 316.

35. "He who has once begun to open the fan of memory never comes to the end of its segments. No image satisfies him, for he has seen that it can be unfolded, and only in the folds does the truth reside—that image, that taste, that touch for whose sake all this has been unfurled and dissected; and now remembrance progresses from small to smallest details, from the smallest to the infinitesimal, while that which it encounters in these microcosms grows ever mightier." Walter Benjamin, "A Berlin Chronicle," trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 2:597.

36. Angelika Rauch, "The Broken Vessel of Tradition," *Representations* 53 (Winter 1996): 86. For the ways experience is conceived in the theories of Simmel, Kracauer, and Benjamin see David Frisby, *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986).

37. Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 335, 354. "Each situation in which the chronicler is touched by the breath of lost time is thereby rendered incomparable and removed from the sequence of the days." Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 354 n. 75.

38. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nicolai Leskov," in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 3:143–166. "A story does not aim to convey an event per se, which is the purpose of information; rather, it embeds the event in the life of the storyteller in order to pass it on as experience to those listening. It thus bears the trace of the storyteller, much the way an earthen vessel bears the trace of the potter's hand" (Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 316). See also Walter Benjamin, "Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of his Death," in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 2:794–818; and Walter Benjamin, *Benjamin über Kafka: Texte, Briefzeugnisse, Aufzeichnungen,* ed. Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981).

39. "The storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale. The novelist has secluded himself. The birthplace of the novel is the individual in his isolation,

the individual who can no longer speak of his concerns in exemplary fashion, who himself lacks counsel and can give none." Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Observations on the Works of Nikolai Leskov," trans. Howard Eiland, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 3:146.

40. Osborne, "Victories, Defeats," 81.

41. Walter Benjamin, "On the Program of the Coming Philosophy," trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 1:100–113. See also his fragment of 1917, "On Perception," in ibid., 93–96.

42. Scholem, *Walter Benjamin,* 73.

43. Benjamin, "Image of Proust," 238.

44. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie,* 261.

45. Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 334.

46. Walter Benjamin, "Central Park" [written ca. April 1938–February 1939] in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 4:181.

47. "Allegory should be shown as the antidote to myth. Myth was the comfortable route from which Baudelaire abstained. A poem like 'La Vie antérieure,' whose very title invites every sort of compromise, shows how far removed Baudelaire was from myth." Benjamin, "Central Park," 179. See also Susan Buck-Morss, "Historical Nature: Ruin," in *Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), 159–201; and Winfried Menninghaus, "Walter Benjamin's Theory of Myth," in Smith, *On Walter Benjamin,* 292–325. Distinguishing prehistory from myth, Benjamin leveled his critique at the regeneration of myth in contemporary society, a cottage industry he found most disturbing. On the German "hunger for myth" in these years see Theodore Ziolkowski, "Der Hunger nach dem Mythos: Zur seelischen Gastronomie der Deutschen in den Zwanziger Jahren," in *Die sogennanten Zwanziger Jahre,* ed. Reinhold Grimm and Jost Hermand (Bad Homburg: H. Gehlen, 1970), 169–201. Benjamin's theory of allegory, though in concert with the overarching aims I address here, is outside the scope of the present study.

48. Benjamin, "Central Park," 162.

49. Benjamin, "Rigorous Study of Art," 85, 90. Citing Walter Muschg, "Das Dichterporträt in der Literaturgeschichte" (in *Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft,* ed. Emil Ermatinger [Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1930], 314), Benjamin writes that "indeed, the 'turn away from an uncritical realism in the contemplation of history' and 'the shriveling up of macroscopic constructions' are the most important hallmarks of the new research" (85). As Benjamin indicates, this new research shares affinities with contemporary literary scholarship. Benjamin takes the title of his essay from Hans Sedlmayr's "Towards a Rigorous Study of Art," the lead article of *Kunstwissenschaftliche Forschungen.* For a translation of Sedlmayr's essay see Christopher Wood, ed., *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s* (New York: Zone Books, 2003), 133–179. On the publication history of Benjamin's 1933 review see Levin, "Walter Benjamin and the Theory of Art History," 81–82.

50. Benjamin, "Rigorous Study of Art," 87. Commenting on Riegl's 1898 essay, "Art History as Universal History," Benjamin notes the way Riegl "differentiates the methodology of the older practice based on universal history from a new approach to the study of art for which he himself paved the way. The latter consists of a penetrating interpretation of the individual work which, without in any way betraying its principles, uncovers laws and problems of the development of art as a whole." Benjamin, "Rigorous Study of Art," 88 n. 18.

51. Benjamin, "Rigorous Study of Art," 87–89. On Benjamin's absorption and transformation of Riegl's method see Giles Peaker, "Works That Have Lasted . . . Walter Benjamin Reading Aloïs Riegl," in *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts, 2001), 291–309.

52. Levin, "Walter Benjamin," 78–79.

53. Gershom Scholem, "Walter Benjamin und Felix Noeggerath," in *Walter Benjamin und sein Engel: Vierzehn Aufsätze und kleine Beiträge* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 84–85. Cited in Levin, "Walter Benjamin," 79–80.

54. Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* [1928], trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 1994). The influence of Riegl is especially keen in Benjamin's "Epistemo-Critical Prologue," and he is cited at several points throughout the book. See Charles Rosen's elegant essay on Benjamin's book, "The Ruins of Walter Benjamin" (in Smith, *On*

*Walter Benjamin,* 129–175), which remains incisive and thought provoking after almost thirty years. The rejection of *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* Benjamin's habilitation thesis, by the faculty of the University of Frankfurt, ended any hope for an academic career. Benjamin subsequently scraped together a living as a freelance writer, reviewer, translator, and narrator of radio broadcasts for children.

55. For Panofsky's critique of Wölfflin, see chapter 1. On Wölfflin's method see his well-known studies *Renaissance and Baroque* [1898], trans. Kathrin Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966); and *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art* [1915], trans. M. D. Hottinger (New York: Dover, 1950). For the secondary literature on Wölfflin see chapter 1, note 40.

56. Jennings, *Dialectical Images,* 154 n. 32; Levin, "Walter Benjamin," 78. Riegl's 1901 study is available in an unfortunately inadequate English translation: Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry,* trans. Rolf Winkes (Rome: Giorgio Bretschneider Editore, 1985). On Riegl's book and its publication history see Olin, *Forms of Representation,* 129–153.

57. Barbara Harlow, "Realignment: Alois Riegl's Image of Late Roman Art Industry," *Glyph* 3 (1978): 113–136. See also Ignasi de Solà-Morales ("Toward a Modern Museum: From Riegl to Giedion," *Oppositions* 25 [1982]: 2), who explains that Riegl's "thought was developed as an effort to reconstruct the meaning of the work of art at a moment when the Enlightenment model of the Museum as a collection was in crisis and when, for the same reasons, the idea of art history as a purely classificatory discipline was also in crisis."

58. Arguing against his contemporary, Joseph Strzygowski's, views on the nature of the art of late antiquity, Riegl writes evocatively about the relation between regression and progression he finds in works of this period: "The screw of time has seemingly turned all the way back to its old position, yet in reality it has ended up one full turn higher, and it is now removed by a deep furrow from that point at which it seemed once again to have arrived" (Riegl, "Late Roman or Oriental?" 187). On Riegl and Strzygowski's views of late Roman art see Jaś Elsner, "The Birth of Late Antiquity: Riegl and Strzygowski in 1901," *Art History* 25, no. 3 (June 2002): 358–379. On Riegl's understanding of relative value see Zerner, "Aloïs Riegl." See also Joseph Leo Koerner and Lisbet Koerner, "Value," in *Critical Terms for Art History,* ed. Robert Nelson and Richard Shiff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 292–306. For an application of Riegl's theory to the sciences see Paul Feyerabend, "Science as Art: A Discussion of Riegl's Theory of Art and an Attempt to Apply it to the Sciences," *Art and Text* 12 & 13 (1984): 16–46.

59. Walter Benjamin, "Bücher, die lebendig geblieben sind," *Gesammelte Schriften,* vol. 3, ed. Hella Tiedemann-Bartels (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 170; trans. Levin, "Walter Benjamin," 80. Incidentally, in *Aesthetics and Art History* (published in London in 1950), Bernard Berenson remarked that he knew "of no other publication in our field more indispensable to thoughtful students" than Riegl's *Late Roman Art Industry;* cited by Otto Pächt, "Art Historians and Art Critics—VI: Alois Riegl," *Burlington Magazine* 105, no. 2 (May 1963): 188–193. Berenson's connoisseurship and issues of objectivity are addressed in my conclusion.

60. De Solà-Morales, "Toward a Modern Museum," 73.

61. As Henri Zerner rightly remarks, "Riegl's analytical and historical investigations exploded the notion of value into fragments. . . . The history of art becomes not merely the history of artistic production, but also the history of values" (Zerner, "Alois Riegl," 187). It would be interesting to compare Riegl's conception of relative value with what James Clifford has termed "the art-culture system," a progressive, open-ended system that is nonetheless established by the value of the terms that define it. See James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures,* ed. Russell Ferguson et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 141–169.

62. Alois Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie,* 2nd ed. (Vienna: Der Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1927), 19. As Margaret Iverson notes, Riegl's "insistence on recognizing the historical character of aesthetic judgment was a pioneering effort and is now being extended to the art of peoples out of the mainstream of western civilization that had formerly been of interest only to archaeologists and anthropologists." Margaret Iverson, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), 6. See also Yve-Alain Bois, "Kahnweiler's Lesson," in *Painting as Model* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 65–97; and Kurt Foster, "Monument/Memory and the Mortality of Architecture," *Oppositions* 25 (Fall 1972):

5–16. On the way the present conditions one's view of the past see David Rosand, "Art History and Criticism: The Past as Present," *New Literary History* 5, no. 3 (Spring 1974): 435–445.

63. On the *Kunstwollen* see Olin, *Forms of Representation*, 148–153; Pächt, "Alois Riegl," 188–193; and Iverson, *Alois Riegl*, 2–18. Riegl provided intimations of his theory of the *Kunstwollen* in his study of ornament, *Stilfragen: Grundlegung zu einer Geschichte der Ornamentik*, first published in Berlin in 1893; translated by Evelyn Kain as *Problems of Style: Foundations for a History of Ornament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). His theory of the *Kunstwollen* as part of the larger worldview of a period appears in *Late Roman Art Industry*.

64. Translated by Christopher Wood, in Wood, *Vienna School Reader*, 96; translation modified. See also Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie*, 26.

65. Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie*, 401, trans. David Britt. Cited in Kemp, introduction to *Group Portraiture of Holland*, 3.

66. "I know of few more instructive things," Pächt continues, "than to watch Riegl in his efforts to learn from the works of art the questions which they want to be asked and to elicit from them the answers" (Pächt, "Alois Riegl," 190, 193).

67. Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Culture: Its Social and Politics Significance," in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* [1954] (London: Penguin, 1985), 211–212.

68. See for instance Friedrich Nietzsche, "On The Use and Abuse of History," and "Schopenhauer as Educator" (in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. Adrian Collins, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol. 5 [New York: Gordon, 1974]), which the German Students' Reading Society read and discussed in 1876 and 1877.

69. Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie*, 8. Here Riegl is referring to the architect and historian Gottfried Semper. Riegl deplored mechanistic historians, calling them "the holdovers of Darwinism in the field of the humanities." Cited in Willibald Sauerländer, "Alois Riegl und die Entstehung der autonomen Kunstgeschichte am Fin de siècle," in *Fin de Siècle: Zu Literatur und Kunst der Jahrhundertwende*, ed. Roger Bauer et. al. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 134. Margaret Iverson (*Alois Riegl*, 22ff.) makes the important point that in his criticism of materialist historians Riegl was not so much deriding Semper as his followers, the so-called sub-Semperians. This group included Otto Wagner, the powerful professor of fine arts at the University of Vienna and chief architect of the construction of Vienna's rail- and waterways.

70. Anthony Vidler, "The 'Art' of History: Monumental Aesthetics from Wincklemann to Quatremère de Quincy," *Oppositions*, no. 25 (Fall 1982): 7.

71. "In its Viennese cultural context, this was an attempt to write an objective art history which could nonetheless incorporate the problem of subjectivity—a scientific approach parallel with contemporary work in the same city by the likes of Husserl and Freud." Jaś Elsner, "Birth of Late Antiquity," 360. See also Olin, *Forms of Representation*, 180–187.

72. On this trend generally see Hermann Lübbe, "Die Einheit von Naturgeschichte und Kulturgeschichte: Bemerkung zum Geschichtsbegriffe," *Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur*, no. 10 (1981): 3–19; and Rudiger vom Bruch, Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, and Gangolf Hübner, eds., *Kultur und Kulturwissenschaft um 1900: Krise der Moderne und Glaube an die Wissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1989). In regard to Riegl specifically see Norbert Wiribal, "Denkmal und Interesse," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 36 (1983): 151–173. On systematicity in art history see chapter 1.

73. On this point see Sauerländer, "Alois Riegl," 135. See also Jörg Oberhaidacher, "Riegls Idee einer theoretischen Einheit von Gegenstand und Betrachter und ihre Folgen für die Kunstgeschichte," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1985): 199–218.

74. As Kurt Forster puts it,

> Riegl combined rigorous research with highly speculative thinking. His professional career reflects the dilemma of historical scholarship, which compelled him to marshal an enormous and constantly multiplying mass of fragmentary data within a framework of philosophic explanation. Riegl did not make the task of the historian any easier when he rejected both idealist and positivist interpretations. He found no basis for the Hegelian conviction about the progressive embodiment of the spirit, and

> he was especially dissatisfied with the prevalent chronicling of events in a narrowly objective sense. . . . He found the "spirit" not to hover above the melee but to exist only within it, and he felt the objective assembly of facts to be profoundly impossible since they were never facts without qualities.

Kurt Forster, "Monument/Memory and the Mortality of Architecture," *Oppositions* 25 (1982): 3. Here again we are reminded of Goethe's maxim "Every fact is already theory." As Iverson (*Alois Riegl,* 10–12) points out, Riegl's developmental history suffers from some of the difficulties of Hegel's philosophy of history as well as "some of the familiar tropes of orientalist discourse."

75. Riegl's conception of haptic and optic modes of perception draws on Adolf von Hildebrand's "near" and "distant" types of vision, as delineated in his *The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts* [1893], trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou, in *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873–1893* (Santa Monica, Calif.: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994), 227–279.

76. Alois Riegl, "The Place of the Vapheio Cups in the History of Art" [1900], trans. Tawney Becker, in Wood, *Vienna School Reader,* 123–124. As Christopher Wood notes in his introduction, Riegl's attempts to link art and culture could slip into associations between works of art and national character that strike today's reader as highly problematic. In his essay on the Vapheio Cups, for instance, Riegl remarks:

> Whereas the Egyptian proceeded objectivistically and attempted to render things as they are experienced in their tactile reality, beyond the contingencies of optical appearance, the Indo-Germanic artist approached his work subjectivistically in that he portrayed only the main features of a momentary optical *impression.* . . . We see here all at once the contrast between ancient Near Eastern-Semitic and Indo-Germanic cultures that has largely dominated all subsequent human development. The influence of the Near Eastern peoples, ultimately always a retarding element, was at the proper moment useful to Westerners. Yet true progress, and therefore the upper hand in politics and culture, finally fell for all time to the Indo-Germanic peoples." (117)

77. Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie,* 43–44.

78. As Riegl puts it earlier in his study, "Not only is depth imperceptible to the senses—we have found the same to be true of both surface dimensions—but it also is only comprehensible following a far more complicated thought process than [that employed in order to understand] surface dimensions" (Riegl, *Spätrömische Kunstindustrie,* 29).

79. Ibid., 361.

80. Harlow, "Realignment," 123, 124. On perceptual indistinctness, spatial collapse, and the uncanny in relation to architecture see Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays on the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

81. Writing in defense of *Late Roman Art Industry,* Riegl noted how this "art-historical approach, which endeavors to look beneath the surface appearance of things, and thereby uncovers essentially new areas, must of necessity first create its own dialectical terminology, which will not immediately be comprehensible to every reader" (Riegl, "Late Roman or Oriental?" 186).

82. Beat Wyss addresses age value in relation to Freud's "oceanic feeling" in his essay "Jenseits des Kunstwollens: Anmerkungen zum Historismus," in *Beiträge zu Kunst und Kunstgeschichte um 1900,* ed. Eduard Hüttinger (Zurich: Schweizerisches Institut für Kunstwissenschaft, 1986), 27–37. Erika Naginski examines historical value and age value in relation to contemporary archeological practices, especially the stratigraphic image and the wall photograph, in "Riegl, Archaeology, and the Periodization of Culture," *Res* 40 (2001): 135–152. Recent collections of Riegl's writings on monuments place his essays within a contemporary stream of debate about preservation and conservation. These include Ernst Bacher, ed., *Kunstwerk oder Denkmal? Alois Riegls Schriften zur Denkmalpflege* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1995); and Scarrocchia, *Alois Riegl.* See also Sandro Scarrocchia, *Studi su Alois Riegl* (Emilia-Romagna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1986).

83. Riegl was appointed head of the Art Conservation Commission in 1901. On the history of moment preservation in Austria see Margaret Olin, "The Cult of Monuments as

a State Religion in Late 19th-Century Austria," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1985): 177–198. It is perhaps not surprising to note that in "Austria, as in other European countries, historical preservation began in conjunction with political restoration" (180). On the cultural history of Vienna during these years see Carl Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1980); Kurt Varnedoe, *Vienna 1900: Art, Architecture and Design* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986); and Peter Vergo, *Art in Vienna, 1898–1918: Klimt, Kokoschka, Schiele and Their Contemporaries* (London: Phaidon, 1993).

84. Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin," trans. Kurt Forster and Diane Ghirardo, *Oppositions* 25 (1982): 2. Riegl's term "unintentional monuments" refers to works which were not created as monuments, but which may nonetheless be deemed worthy of preservation by succeeding generations on account of their art value, historical value, age value, and so forth. Though Riegl recognized the literary text as a monument in its own right, in this essay he concentrates his attention on "artistic" monuments.

85. Ibid., 23.

86. Ibid., 24.

87. The phrase "beholder's involvement" is Michael Podro's. See Podro, *The Critical Historians of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 96.

88. Riegl, "Modern Cult of Monuments," 26.

89. Ibid., 28. On the historical value of unintentional monuments see also Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument,* trans. Loren O'Connell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

90. Thomas Greene, "Petrarch and the Humanist Hermeneutic," in *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 81–103. See also David Galbraith, "Petrarch and the Broken City," in *Antiquity and its Interpreters,* ed. Alina Payne, Ann Kuttner, and Rebekah Smick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 17–26.

91. Greene, "Petrarch," 204. Greene credits Peter Burke (*The Renaissance Sense of the Past* [New York: St. Martin's, 1970], 2) for noting how the Roman ruins were perceived prior to Petrarch.

92. Riegl indicates how historical value inspires a consciousness of the past that may then aid in the formation of historical and national identities (Riegl, "Modern Cult of Monuments," 26). For examples of this process in England, France, and Germany see Margaret Aston, "English Ruins and English History: The Dissolution and The Sense of the Past," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973): 231–255; Ingrid Daemmrich, "The Ruins Motif as Artistic Device in French Literature," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 31, no. 1 (Fall 1972): 31–41; and Karen Lang, "Monumental Unease: Monuments and the Making of National Identity in Germany," in *Imagining Modern German Culture: 1889–1910,* ed. Françoise Forster-Hahn, Studies in the History of Art 53 (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1996), 274–299.

93. Riegl, "Modern Cult of Monuments," 29. On the difference between a Renaissance and a nineteenth-century sense of historical value see ibid., 28.

94. Ibid., 32. As a result, "permanent preservation is not possible because natural forces are ultimately more powerful than all the wit of man, and man himself is destined to inevitable decay" (37). This explains why both over-restoration and premature decay disconcert our sensibilities, for in each instance the normal progress of aging, and its traces, are disrupted. The intentional incorporation of age value, as sign, into an object, representation, or narrative calls attention to itself as sham—as in a sham ruin or in a narrative purposefully written in an obsolete patois. As a consequence, it is much less disconcerting in the Rieglian sense.

95. Georg Simmel, "Die Ruine," in *Philosophische Kultur: Gesammelte Essais* (Leipzig: W. Klinkhardt, 1911), 137–154.

96. Riegl, "Modern Cult of Monuments," 24. If we were to follow Horkheimer and Adorno, we could say that a feeling of nature's power over humankind, invoked in this instance by age value, functions as a kind of return of the repressed: man, believing he has dominated nature, here finds himself defenseless against the monumental power of nature's continual destruction. See Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,*

ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002), esp. "Excursus I: Odysseus or Myth and Enlightenment," 35–62. I take up this point in my afterword.

97. Riegl, "Modern Cult of Monuments," 32.

98. In Riegl's distinction between the modern notion of age value and that of the Baroque period, we witness again his emphasis upon the historicity of perception and the relative nature of commemorative value. While the Baroque sense of age value is clearly tied to historical value, and an attendant sense of melancholy over the loss of "ancient greatness," modern age value has become detached from historical value. Modern age value is simply the reminder of the inexorable natural laws "governing all artifacts" (Riegl, "Modern Cult of Monuments," 31).

99. One could argue that the concept of history is also outside of time. Yet I would argue that the concept of nature is an abyss whose origin will always precede—and recede behind—any attempt to chart its history. My view of the temporal relation of nature and history is inspired by Benjamin. When the concept of nature is conceived as beyond history or historical memory, then it shares affinities with involuntary memory (*Erinnerung*) as well as the temporality evoked in Baudelaire's sonnet "La Vie antérieure."

100. This is not to say that eternity does not include a concept of time. To borrow the poetic language of Joubert: "Time is found even in eternity; but it is not earthly, worldly time. . . . It does not destroy; it merely completes." Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1883), 162; cited in Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 331.

101. "Nineteenth-century preservation of monuments rested essentially on the two premises of the originality of style (its historical-value) and the unity of style (its newness-value)"; age value, in contrast, is "interested neither in originality nor unity of style, but . . . in transcending them both" (Riegl, "Modern Cult of Monuments," 46). For Riegl, the rise of a modern cult of age value signals "the emancipation of the individual in modern times." The "characteristic drive" in this emancipation is none other than "the desire to transcend an objective physical and psychic perception in favor of a subjective experience."

102. Riegl, "Modern Cult of Monuments," 33. This has decisive implications for preservation: "From the standpoint of age-value one need not worry about the eternal preservation of monuments, but rather one should be concerned with the constant representation of the cycle of creation, and this purpose is fulfilled even when future monuments have supplanted those of today."

103. Ibid., 34–35.

104. Riegl, "Late Roman or Oriental?" 174.

105. Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 177. The conception of history as a process of decay also animates the ninth of Benjamin's theses on the concept of history where, in an image that has been subject to much interpretive labor, he characterizes the past and history as a great pile of debris—"one single catastrophe" rather than "a chain of events"—being hurled at the feet of the angel of history. Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin*, 4:392.

106. "The task of future epistemology is to find for knowledge the sphere of total neutrality in regard to the concepts of both subject and object; in other words, it is to discover the autonomous, innate sphere of knowledge in which this concept in no way continues to designate the relation between two metaphysical entities. . . . A way must be found in metaphysics to form a pure and systematic continuum of experience; indeed, it seems that the true meaning of experience is to be sought in this area. . . . The failing of neo-Kantianism can be suspected in its neglect of this continuity" (Benjamin, "Program of the Coming Philosophy," 104, 109). Although it is beyond this chapter to explore, I should like to note that Benjamin's conception of "higher experience" resonates with this theory of language, especially his understanding of the "name."

107. Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 223.

108. Benjamin, "Program of the Coming Philosophy," 100.

109. Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," 517.

110. "Now, to bring things *closer* to us, or rather to the masses, is just as passionate an inclination in our day as the overcoming of whatever is unique in every situation by means of its reproduction. . . . The peeling away of the object's shell, the destruction of the aura, is

the signature of a perception whose sense for the sameness of things has grown to the point where even the singular, the unique, is divested of its uniqueness—by means of its reproduction" (ibid., 519).

111. Benjamin makes this clear in a lapidary comment: "Naturbeherrschend 'werden wir der Sache habhaft: in der Aura bemächtigt sie sich unser.'" Cited in Marleen Stoessel, *Aura: Das vergessene Menschliche; Zu Sprache und Erfahrung bei Walter Benjamin* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1983), 48.

112. Walter Benjamin, "A Child's View of Color," trans. Rodney Livingstone, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 1:50–51; translation modified. See also Benjamin, "Aphorisms on Imagination and Color"; "Painting and the Graphic Arts"; and "Painting, or Signs and Marks," all in this volume, 48–49, 82–86. In *Walter Benjamin and the Colour of Experience* (London: Routledge, 1998) Howard Caygill provides a most persuasive demonstration of the relation of these early texts to Benjamin's critique of Kantian experience. Caygill rightly remarks that the subtext of Benjamin's "A Child's View of Color" "is the replacement of Kant's forms of intuition (space and time) with color as a (transitive and shifting) medium of intuition" (83).

113. Charles Baudelaire, "La Vie antérieure," in *Les Fleurs du Mal,* trans. Richard Howard (Boston: David Godine, 1983), 199.

114. Charles Baudelaire, "Le Goût du néant," in *Les Fleurs du Mal,* 255.

115. Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 334, 336, 338. Benjamin quotes Novalis, *Schriften* (Berlin: Reimer, 1901), pt. 2 (first half), 293. Georges Didi-Huberman explores this supposition of the aura in his book *Ce que nous voyons, ce qui nous regarde* (Paris: Minuit, 1992).

116. Here I concur with Stoessel, *Aura,* who stresses the investment (*Belehnung*) of the subject in the experience of the aura over projection or possession. See also Birgit Recki, *Aura und Autonomie: Zur Subjektivität der Kunst bei Walter Benjamin and Theodor W. Adorno* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1988), 23–25. It is important to underline how investing the object with the ability to look back enables the object to resist the physical and the conceptual grasp. It was precisely this type of resistance that Adorno had in mind with his plea for the autonomy of art. According to him, the "two extreme forms" of the loss of art's autonomy (*Entkunstung*) "are reification—art viewed as a thing among things—and psychologism—art viewed as a vehicle for the psychology of the viewer. The reified works of art, which have ceased to speak, are made to say the things the viewer wants them to say and which are the stereotyped echo of himself." Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* trans. C. Lenhardt (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 25. I explore this point in my conclusion and afterword.

117. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," trans. Harry Zohn and Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* 4:255; and Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 338. The author continues by equating this "unique apparition of a distance" to the ceremonial quality of the cult object, which is likewise defined through connotations of distance and unapproachability. It follows that a decay in distance results in the loss of the aura and the demise in the cult status of an object. In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," Benjamin asserts that processes of technological reproducibility—such as photography—have led to a decay of the aura, and hence to a decline in the cult status of the object. When the object loses its cult value, it may then assume a political function.

118. "If we think of the associations which, at home in the *mémoire involontaire,* seek to cluster around an object of perception, and if we call those associations the aura of that object, then the aura attaching to the object of a perception corresponds precisely to the experience [*Erfahrung*] which, in the case of an object of use, inscribes itself as long practice" (Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 337).

119. See Benjamin, "Image of Proust" and "Little History of Photography."

120. In contrast to the snapshot, this "procedure itself caused the subject to focus his life in a moment rather than hurrying on past" (Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," 514).

121. The generation that first engaged with the new technology of photography, Benjamin writes, "rather shyly drawing back into their private space in the face of such pro-

ceedings . . . , for this reason allowed that space, the space in which they lived, to get onto the plate with them" (ibid., 519).

122. Ibid., 510. He continues: "For it is another nature which speaks to the camera rather than to the [human] eye: 'other' above all in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious."

123. Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 336. See also Andrew Benjamin, "The Decline of Art: Benjamin's Aura," *Oxford Art Journal* 9, no. 2 (1986): 30–35. Though he does not cite her, Andrew Benjamin's conclusions concur with Stoessel's. Rudolphe Gasché draws a relation between the aura and the noumenal (Rudolphe Gasché, "Objective Diversions: On Some Kantian Themes in Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproduction,'" in *Walter Benjamin's Philosophy: Destruction and Experience*, ed. Andrew Benjamin and Peter Osborne [London: Routledge, 1994], 183–204). See also Werner Fuld, "Die Aura: Zur Geschichte eines Begriffes bei Benjamin," *Akzente* 26 no. 3 (June 1979): 352–370; Josef Fürnkäs, "Aura," in *Benjamins Begriffe*, ed. Michael Opitz and Erdmut Wizisla (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000), 95–143; and Burkhardt Lindner, "Benjamins Aurakonzeption: Anthropologie und Technik, Bild und Text," in Steiner, *Walter Benjamin*, 217–248.

124. This asymptotic relationship is best described through language itself. When Martin Heidegger describes "a recalling, remembering, memorializing, and responding to an original call coming from the central living presencing of the being of the world," he uses the word *andenken*. In German the prefix *an* indicates "on," "about," or "toward" something. Hence, *andenken* indicates something in the vicinity of thought but not actually represented in thought itself. It is interesting to note that *Erinnerung* also takes the preposition *an*. Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 1971), 163–186.

125. Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 324. For Benjamin's reading of the female figure in Baudelaire's sonnet "À une passante," see Christine Buci-Glucksmann, "Catastrophic Utopia: The Feminine as Allegory of the Modern," in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Catherine Gallager and Thomas Laqueur (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 220–229; Rey Chow, "Walter Benjamin's Love Affair with Death," *New German Critique* 48 (Fall 1989): 63–86; and Elissa Marder, "Flat Death: Snapshots of History," *diacritics* 22, nos. 3–4 (Fall–Winter 1992): 128–144.

126. Walter Benjamin, "Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990), vol. 1, pt. 1, p. 216.

127. Fürnkäs, "Aura," 120–121.

128. Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," 517.

129. "What are phenomena rescued from? Not only, and not in the main, from the discredit and neglect into which they have fallen, but from the catastrophe represented very often by a certain strain in their dissemination, their 'enshrinement as heritage'" (Benjamin, N9,4, in *Arcades Project*, 473). On this point see also Stéphane Mosès, "The Theological-Political Model of History in the Thought of Walter Benjamin," *History and Memory* 1, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 1989): 5–33.

130. The useful concept of invented tradition is proposed and elaborated by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger in their edited volume, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

131. Compare the critique of Nazi rituals by Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times* [1935], trans. Neville Plaice and Stephen Plaice (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991). See also the important study by Lutz Koepnick, *Walter Benjamin and the Aesthetics of Power* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

132. In this sense, the manner in which Benjamin criticizes Bergson's *durée* as isolated "effectively from the historical (and prehistorical) order" applies to the condition of experience under German fascism: "The *durée* from which death has been eliminated has the bad infinity of an ornament. Tradition is excluded from it. It is the quintessence of an isolated experience [*Erlebnis*] that struts about in the borrowed garb of long experience [*Erfahrung*]" (Benjamin, "Motifs in Baudelaire," 336).

133. Walter Benjamin, "Concept of History," 390.

134. Peter Szondi, "Hope in the Past: On Walter Benjamin," *Critical Inquiry* 4, no. 3

(Spring 1978), 499, 501. Szondi writes: "Unlike Proust's search, Benjamin's is borne along by historical and sociological impulses. He is seeking a way out of sclerotic late-bourgeois society, enslaved to the principle of individualism, back to the lost origins of society itself. The protest that the young Hegel and Hölderlin raised against 'positivity' in the name of living becomes audible again in Benjamin. This accounts for his participation in the German Youth Movement, as his essay 'The Life of Students' attests." Peter Szondi, "Walter Benjamin's City Portraits," in Smith, *On Walter Benjamin,* 24.

135. Benjamin, K1,1, in *Arcades Project,* 388–389. See also Norbet Bolz, "Die kopernikanisch gewendete Geschichte," in *Auszug aus der entzauberten Welt: Philosophischer Extremismus zwischen den Weltkriegen* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1989), 95–144; Horst Folkers, "Die gerettete Geschichte: Ein Hinweis aus Walter Benjamins Begriff der Erinnerung," in *Mnemosyne: Formen und Funktionen der kulturellen Erinnerung,* ed. Aleida Assmann and Dietrich Harth (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1991), 363–377; and Roland Kany, *Mnemosyne als Programm: Geschichte, Erinnerung und die Andacht zum Unbedeutenden im Werk von Usener, Warburg und Benjamin* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1987), 214–223.

136. In notes for his *Arcades Project,* Benjamin makes an analogy between the retrieval of the historical character or density of the past and the development of a photograph: "The past has left images of itself in literary texts, images comparable to those which are imprinted by light on a photosensitive plate. The future alone possesses developers active enough to scan such surfaces perfectly" (Benjamin, N15a,1, in *Arcades Project,* 482). As he demonstrated in regard to *Les fleurs du mal* and the aura of historical objects, so here the character of the past is implicit rather than necessarily explicit; it is deposited in traces or hidden figures which are dispersed within the weave of the image rather than captured in descriptive form.

137. See also the section "The Judging Spectator" in chapter 2.

138. "Benjamin is interested in the experiential context of the French Revolution rather than in the objective changes to which it led." For "the archaic dimension of modernity . . . contains just the potentialities for experience that point the way to the utopian condition of a liberated society. The model is the French Revolution's recourse to ancient Roman antiquity." Jürgen Habermas, "Walter Benjamin: Consciousness-Raising or Rescuing Critique," in Smith, *On Walter Benjamin,* 115–116.

139. Benjamin, "Concept of History," 395.

140. On this dialectical relation between past and present see Benjamin, N1a,3 and N3,1, in *Arcades Project,* 459, 462–463. See also Rolf Tiedemann, "Dialectics at a Standstill," trans. Gary Smith and André Lefevere, in *Arcades Project,* 929–945.

141. Peter Osborne writes:

> Neither instant nor present, Benjamin's now-time historicizes the structure of instantaneity, to produce it as interruption, simultaneously contracting the present into the stasis of its point-like source and expanding its historical content to infinity, in an "enormous abridgement" of "the entire history of humanity." Exploiting the dual, dialectical character of the present, as both durational extension and point-like source, it performs a twofold mediation: of nature (instant) with history (present), and of this historical present ("modernity") with history as a whole (eternity). Neither instant nor present, Benjamin's now-time is "the present *as* now-time [*der Gegenwart* als *der 'Jetztzeit'*]. It is always a historically specific now." ("Victories, Defeats," 86–87).

142. Here I borrow from Irving Wohlfarth's vivid gloss on Benjamin's use of the phrase "imperial panorama": "Sweeping panoramas represent in Benjamin's eyes the commanding, imperial view from above. They are calculated to sweep away all resistance. Haussmann's construction of wide avenues was intended to put an end to all the barricades. . . . The grand vistas carved out by the construction of the *grands boulevards* have their counterpart in those opened up by historians of Culture and Civ as they cast sidelong glances (onto, say *das Zerlumpter*) from the highway of Progress" (Irving Wohlfarth, "Smashing the Kaleidoscope," 199).

143. If "chronological reckoning subordinates duration to regularity," Benjamin

writes, "it cannot prevent heterogenous, conspicuous fragments from remaining within it" ("Motifs in Baudelaire," 336). On the manner in which temporal and spatial difference is subsumed into the rhetoric of modernity see Peter Osborne, "Modernity Is a Qualitative, not a Chronological, Category," *New Left Review* 192 (March–April 1992): 65–84.

144. Benjamin, K2,3, in *Arcades Project*, 391; Benjamin's emphasis.

145. Consider Benjamin: "For an experienced event is finite—at any rate, confined to one sphere of experience; a remembered event is infinite, because it is merely a key to everything that happened before it and after it. . . . Only the *actus purus* of remembrance itself, not the author or the plot, constitutes the unity of the text" ("Image of Proust," 238). While Benjamin emphasizes the crucial role of the beholder, it is important to note that his dialectical method does not "imply perspectivism of one's viewpoint, that is, what subjective arbitrariness and empathy impose on things, but the objective 'multitude of aspects, contents, and meanings' itself, which resides in all things." Hermann Schweppenhäuser, "Propaedeutics of Profane Illumination," in Smith, *On Walter Benjamin*, 43. Here Schweppenhäuser cites from *Walter Benjamin: Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), 6:604.

146. Cited in Benjamin, "Little History of Photography," 520.

## Conclusion

1. Colin Simpson, *Artful Partners: Bernard Berenson and Joseph Duveen* (New York: Macmillan, 1986). See also the appendix to Meryle Secrest, *Being Bernard Berenson* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979), which lists instances when Berenson changed his mind about an attribution, reputedly for monetary gain. Claiming that Simpson and Secrest are ignorant of art history, Sydney Freedberg, in his essay "Berenson, Connoisseurship, and the History of Art" (*New Criterion* 7, no. 6 [February 1989]: 7–16), is quick to defend Berenson's bona fides. Freedberg's research into the evidence in Secrest's appendix disputes her claims, thus confirming for him "both the quality" of Berenson's connoisseurship "and the morality with which he practiced it" (14). Sir John Pope-Hennessey also marshaled the considerable weight of his academic credentials against Simpson's claims in "Berenson's Certificate," *New York Review of Books*, March 12, 1987, 19–20. On Berenson's relation to contemporary art and art history see Mary Ann Calo, *Bernard Berenson and the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

2. On the use, publicity, and reception of "scientific" connoisseurship in America see Flaminia Gennari Santori, *The Melancholy of Masterpieces: Old Master Paintings in America, 1900–1914* (Milan: Continents Editions, 2003).

3. Feminists have actively challenged objectification and the objectivity paradigm. See for instance in order of appearance: Evelyn Fox Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Susan Robin Suleiman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985); Sandra Harding, *The Science Question in Feminism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986); Susan Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987); Teresa de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987); Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987); Catherine MacKinnon, *Feminism Unmodified* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); Robin Schott, *Cognition and Eros: A Critique of the Kantian Paradigm* (Boston: Beacon, 1988); Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London: Routledge, 1988); Mary Hawkesworth, "Knowers, Knowing, Known: Feminist Theory and Claims of Truth," *Signs* 14 (1989): 533–557; Alison Jaggar and Susan Bordo, eds., *Gender/Body/Knowledge* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1989); Janet Wolff, "Reinstating Corporeality: Feminism and Body Politics," in *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 120–141; Mary Hawkesworth, "From Objectivity to Objectification: Feminist Objections," in *Rethinking Objectivity*, ed. Allan Megill (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 151–177.

4. Allan Megill, "'Grand Narrative' and the Discipline of History," in *A New Philosophy of History*, ed. Frank Ankersmit and Hans Kellner (London: Reaktion Books, 1995), 152. Megill's scholarship has sharpened my understanding of the conceptual presumptions on which art history rests, as well as the way notions of objectivity define and shape the field

of art history. Although Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* defined the term and laid out the concept of objectivity, the current philosophical sense of this concept was established by nineteenth-century neo-Kantian philosophers. In the afterword I examine Kantian philosophy and notions of objectivity.

5. In this regard, consider the words of the anthropologist Johannes Fabian ("Ethnographic Objectivity Revisited," in Megill, *Rethinking Objectivity,* 99): "Vision requires distance from its objects; the eye maintains its 'purity' as long as it is not in close contact with 'foreign objects.' Visualism, by instituting distance as that which enables us to know, and purity or immateriality as that which characterizes true knowledge, aimed to remove all the other senses and thereby the body from knowledge production (this, incidentally, is also a context in which the gender question needs to be raised). Visualism, nonetheless, needed some kind of materialization which it found in signs, symbols, and representation." On the preeminence of the eye see also Herbert von Einem, "Das Auge, der Edelste Sinn," *Wallraf-Richartz Jahrbuch* 30 (1968): 275–286; Ernst Gombrich, "Icones Symbolicae," in *Symbolic Images* (London: Phaidon, 1972), 123–191, esp. 146–148; Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993); and Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

6. On authorship in art history see Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History," *Art Bulletin* 73, no. 2 (June 1991): 172–208; Rosalind Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," in *The Originality of the Avant-garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 23–40; Donald Preziosi, *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989); Catherine Soussloff, *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

7. Freedberg, "Berenson," 9.

8. The phrase "still point of uncertainty" is Linda Orr's. In her book *Headless History: Nineteenth-Century French Historiography of the Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 160, she admonishes every writer to "leave a space to show how undefinable and traumatic her or his objects of study are, before rushing to explain them. Every work of history needs a moment of uncertainty, a moment given over to disarray, or rather, the still point of uncertainty." See also her essay "Intimate Images: Subjectivity and History—Staël, Michelet and Tocqueville," in Ankersmit and Kellner, *New Philosophy of History,* 89–107.

9. Compare James Ackerman, "Two Styles: A Challenge to Higher Education," *Daedalus* 98, no. 3 (Summer 1969): 855–869; Megill, *Rethinking Objectivity;* Wolfgang Natter, Theodore Schatzki, and John Paul Jones III, eds., *Objectivity and Its Other* (New York: Guilford, 1995); Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Richard Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); and Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

10. Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), 225.

11. These articles were published under the pseudonym of an unknown Russian scholar, Ivan Lermolieff, and an unknown German translator, Johannes Schwarze, both plays on Morelli's name. Morelli did not reveal his identity as the author of these essays until several years later. See Giacomo Agosti, "Giovanni Morelli in Galleria Borghese: un tentativo di lettura di un saggio critico di Ivan Lermolieff," in *La figura e l'opera di Giovanni Morelli: studi e ricerche,* ed. Hans Ebert, Donata Levi, and Giacomo Agosti (Bergamo: Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, 1987), 55–108. An expanded version of Morelli's articles was included in *Kunstkritische Studien über italienische Malerei: die Galerien Borghese und Doria Panfili in Rom* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1890). Morelli's *Kunstkritische Studien über italienische Malerei: die Galerien zu München und Dresden* was published by the same firm in 1891. These books, translated into English by Constance Ffoulkes, appeared in two volumes in 1892–93 as Giovanni Morelli, *Italian Painters: Critical Studies of Their Works* (London: John Murray). For Berenson's application and extension of Morelli's method see his "Rudiments of Connoisseurship," which was written in the 1890s but not published until 1902 (London: G. Bell and Sons), in *The Study and Criticism of Italian Art,* 2nd ser.; as well as his *Three Essays in*

*Method* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927). Through careful research, Carol Gibson-Wood exposes the mythology surrounding the Morellian method, especially the mythology of the coherence and primacy of his method of attribution. She argues that it "could also be said that Berenson systematized into a pseudoscientific rigidity ideas which Morelli had rather wisely left unanalyzed." Carol Gibson-Wood, *Studies in the Theory of Connoisseurship from Vasari to Morelli* (New York: Garland, 1988), 239–240.

12. Carlo Ginzburg, "Clues: Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes," in *The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Pierce,* ed. Umberto Eco and Thomas Sebeok (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 81.

13. On Morelli's method see Gibson-Wood, *Studies in Connoisseurship,* 222–237; Margherita Ginoulhiac, "Giovanni Morelli: la vita, l'opera, il methodo critico," *Bergomum* 18 (1940): 51–74; Max Friedländer, *On Art and Connoisseurship,* trans. Tancred Borenius [1942] (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), 163–171; John Pope-Hennessy, "Connoisseurship," in *The Study and Criticism of Italian Sculpture* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980), 11–38; and Edgar Wind, *Art and Anarchy* [1963] (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1985), 30–46. Recent critiques of the assumptions of the Morellian method include Hayden B. J. Maginnis, "The Role of Perceptual Learning in Connoisseurship: Morelli, Berenson, and Beyond," *Art History* 13 (March 1990): 104–117; and Richard Wollheim, "Giovanni Morelli and the Origins of Scientific Connoisseurship," in *On Art and the Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 177–201. Maginnis argues that "scientific connoisseurship" is a misleading term, especially since Morelli and Berenson's theories were predicated on an empiricist, picture model of vision and memory that cannot be squared with what we now know about the structure of the eye and its functioning.

14. "The view that certain skills and characteristics are necessarily associated with nationality is a theme that permeates Morelli's ideas about both art and art criticism. . . . Morelli regarded the inability to recognize authorship in paintings as a typically Germanic deficiency" (Gibson-Wood, *Studies in Connoisseurship,* 191). For his part, Bode admitted to "a strange epidemic," the "Lermolieff mania." "The success of this quack doctor," he inveighs, "was all the more complete, in that he extolled his method with an air of infallibility, and held up all previous authorities, especially Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, to the contempt of his credulous following." Wilhelm von Bode, "The Berlin Renaissance Museum," *Fortnightly Review* 50 (1891): 509. See also Manfred Ohlsen, *Wilhelm von Bode: Zwischen Kaisermacht und Kunsttempel* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1995), chap. 5, "Freuden und Leiden," 103–131. For more on Morelli's opinion of Bode, see his thinly veiled comments in *Italian Painters,* 1–63; and extracts from the Morelli-Layard correspondence in Gibson-Wood, *Studies in Connoisseurship,* 277–287. On the particular scorn with which Berenson cast German art history see Berenson, *Caravaggio: His Incongruity and His Fame* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1953), 86–87.

15. Morelli, *Italian Painters,* 15. On Morelli's views of art history versus connoisseurship, as well as on the neglected history of his own aim to develop an "organic" history of Italian painting, see Gibson-Wood, *Studies in Connoisseurship,* 219–237. Incidentally, Berenson, like Morelli, "was averse to the study of art history, which he regarded as . . . unrelated or inimical to the enjoyment of art." David Alan Brown, *Berenson and the Connoisseurship of Italian Painting,* exhibition catalogue (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1979), 11.

16. Morelli, *Italian Painters,* 44–45. Richard Neer draws out the semiotic nature of connoisseurship in his essay "Beazley and the Language of Connoisseurship," *Hephaistos* 15 (1997): 7–30.

17. "As the botanist lives among his fresh or dried plants, the mineralogist among his stones, the geologist among his fossils, so the art-connoisseur ought to live among his photographs and, if his finances permit, among his pictures and statues" (Morelli, *Italian Painters,* 11). On the apparent contradiction between Morelli's stress on the importance of viewing works of art and his own decision to publish his views on art in a book, see Gibson-Wood, *Studies in Connoisseurship,* 199–200.

18. A. H. Layard, introduction to Morelli, *Italian Painters,* 32. I discuss in chapter 1 how Panofsky uses the document in a similar way—which is to say, as a heuristic aid and control over subjective interpretation.

19. Morelli, *Italian Painters,* 35. In *Art and Anarchy,* Wind remarks: "At first glance, Morelli's concentrated study of the lobe of an ear might seem like Wölfflin's curious con-

cern for a nostril, but the resemblance is deceptive. Whereas Wölfflin uses the small detail as a module for building up the larger structure, Morelli cherishes the authentic fragment as the trace of a 'lost original'" (39). For a most perceptive comparative analysis of Morelli and Wölfflin see Hubert Damisch, "La partie et le tout," *Revue d'Esthétique* 23, no. 2 (1970): 168–188.

20. Freud notes the similarities between the Morellian method and psychoanalysis in his 1914 essay, "The Moses of Michelangelo." See Jack Spector, "The Method of Morelli and Its Relation to Freudian Psychoanalysis," *Diogenes* 66 (1969): 63–83.

21. Ginzburg, "Clues," 86, 88, 104.

22. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979); Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography,* ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), 343–389; and John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photography and Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

23. "Galilean science . . . could have taken over the scholastic saying, 'individuum est ineffabile' (we can say nothing about the individual). Using mathematics and the experimental method involved the need to measure and to repeat phenomena, whereas an individualizing approach made the latter impossible and allowed the former only in part. All of which explains why historians have never managed to work out a Galilean method. . . . History always remains a science of a very particular kind, irremediably based in the concrete" (Ginzburg, "Clues," 92). It is interesting to consider how style, which I have proposed as art history's primary analytical category, offers a mediation between the particular and the repeatable that circumvents somewhat the limits imposed on the discipline of history, as these are defined by Ginzburg. As Freedberg observes ("Berenson," 14), connoisseurship "serves all kinds of art history, but it has a special relationship to the history of style." On style in art history see chapter 1.

24. Ginzburg, "Clues," 110.

25. See the text at note 7 above. Berenson acknowledged the role of intuition in connoisseurship. Witness his description under oath in 1929: "When I see a picture, in most cases I recognize it at once as being or not being by the master it is ascribed to; the rest is merely a question of how to try to fish out the evidence that will make the conviction as plain to others as it is to me." Cited in Harry Hahn, *The Rape of La Belle* (Kansas City, Mo.: Frank Glenn Publishing, 1946), 103; quoted in Gary Schwartz, "Connoisseurship: The Penalty of Ahistoricism," *Artibus et Historiae* 18 (1988): 202.

26. Berenson, "Rudiments of Connoisseurship," 147–148. See also Henri Zerner, "Giovanni Morelli et la science de l'art," *Revue de l'Art* 40–41 (1978): 209–215, who, *pace* Berenson, shows how Morelli was interested in the question of quality.

27. Gibson-Wood, *Studies in Connoisseurship,* 247.

28. Cited in Ernst Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* [1970] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 143. See also Meyer Schapiro, "Mr. Berenson's Values," *Encounter* 16 (January 1961): 57–65.

29. Wind, *Art and Anarchy,* 31. Wind even makes bold to suggest: "Whether you take Wölfflin, or Riegl and the Vienna School, or Roger Fry and Clive Bell, or Bernard Berenson, they methodically developed an exquisite skill in skimming off the top of a work of art without necessarily making contact with its imaginative forces, often even shunning that contact because it might disturb the lucid application of a fastidious technique" (23–24).

30. James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Authority," *Representations,* no. 2 (1983): 118–146; reprinted in Clifford, *Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988), 21–54. On the critique of ethnographic authority see, in addition to Clifford, Michel de Certeau, "Writing vs. Time: History and Anthropology in the Works of Lafitau," *Yale French Studies* 59 (1980): 37–64; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978); and George Stocking Jr., ed., *Observers Observed: Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983). See also Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer," in *Return of the Real,* 170–203, which persuasively demonstrates how "the recent *self-critique* of anthropology . . . promises a reflexivity of the ethnographer at the center even as it preserves a romanticism of the other at the margins" (182). As Foster points out, this romanticism of the other has implications for the ethnographic turn in contemporary art since "the quasi-anthropological role set up for the artist can pro-

mote a presuming as much as a questioning of ethnographic authority, an evasion as often as an extension of institutional critique" (197).

31. Vincent Crapanzano aptly describes the present tense as "a tenseless tense, if you will, which serves at once to give a feeling of time's flow and to permit generalizations." Vincent Crapanzano, "Hermes Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description," in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography,* ed. James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 65. See also the classic texts on discourse by Emile Benveniste, "The Nature of Pronouns" and "Subjectivity in Language," trans. Mary Elizabeth Mack, in *Problems in General Linguistics* (Coral Gables, Fla.: University of Miami Press, 1971), 217–230. On the use of the present tense and active voice in Malinowski's landmark 1922 study of the Trobriand Islanders, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific,* see George Stocking Jr., "The Ethnographer's Magic: Fieldwork in British Anthropology from Tylor to Malinowski," in Stocking, *Observers Observed,* 70–120.

32. Here I am very closely paraphrasing Crapanzano ("Hermes Dilemma," 51): "Despite its frequent ahistorical—its synchronic—pretense, ethnography is historically determined by the moment of the ethnographer's encounter with whomever he is studying."

33. "His is a roving perspective, necessitated by his 'totalistic' presentation of the events he is describing. His presence does not alter the way things happen or, for that matter, the way they are observed or interpreted. He assumes an invisibility that, unlike Hermes, a god, he cannot, of course, have" (Crapanzano, "Hermes Dilemma," 53). Kenneth Gergen indicates how the use of elaborate detail produces a similar effect. His remark certainly resonates with much art history writing: "By furnishing minute detail, much of it irrelevant to the author's conclusions, the author demonstrates that observation is unbiased. In Freud's terms, the observer has properly demonstrated 'evenly hovering attention'" (Kenneth Gergen, "The Mechanical Self and the Rhetoric of Objectivity," in Megill, *Rethinking Objectivity,* 277). On aperspectival objectivity see also Lorraine Daston, "Objectivity and the Escape from Perspective," *Social Studies of Science* 22, no. 4 (November 1992): 597–618; and Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, "The Image of Objectivity," *Representations,* no. 40 (Fall 1992): 81–128.

34. Gergen, "Mechanical Self," 280.

35. On the view from nowhere see Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); and Karl Popper, *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972). On Baconian facts see Lorraine Daston, "Baconian Facts, Academic Civility, and the Prehistory of Objectivity," in Megill, *Rethinking Objectivity,* 37–63; and, in a related vein, Peter Dear, "From Truth to Disinterestedness in the Seventeenth Century," *Social Studies of Science* 22, no. 4 (November 1992): 619–631.

36. As Sydney Freedberg rightly remarks, the Villa I Tatti, the connoisseur's Italian home, "was meant, from a relatively early time in Berenson's career, to be a monument to himself and what he had accomplished. And, like most monuments, it was meant at the very same time to perpetuate *and* to supplant the actuality it recalled" (Freedberg, "Berenson," 8).

37. James Hall, *Dictionary of Substitutions and Symbols in Art* (London: John Murray, 1974), 154.

38. Megill, "Introduction: Four Senses of Objectivity," in Megill, *Rethinking Objectivity,* 1–20.

39. Jack Greenstein, *Mantegna and Painting as Historical Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 15. He continues: "Thus, ancient Greek historians faced a problem that has plagued historians to this day: establishing one's reliability as an investigator demanded the straightforward presentation of the nonartistic, verifiable information uncovered through research; but the intellectual value of this information derived from its being narratively interconnected within an effective, and hence artistically composed, literary work" (17).

40. Certeau, "Writing vs. Time," 63. Compare David Freedberg: "Much of our sophisticated talk about art is simply an evasion. We take refuge in such talk . . . because we are afraid to come to terms with our responses." David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 429–430. And Michael Ann Holly: "We have always known that objects of art have a numinous power about them. And yet, ironically, as art historians we repress that power with a power play

of our own: an attempt to explain or describe or capture that hypnotic hold through labels and schemes of our own devising. . . . The person who does the looking is the person with the power. No doubt about it: looking is power, but so too is the ability to make someone look." Michael Ann Holly, *Past Looking: Historical Imagination and the Rhetoric of the Image* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 90.

41. Megill, "Introduction," 2.

42. See Evelyn Fox Keller, "The Paradox of Scientific Subjectivity," in Megill, *Rethinking Objectivity,* 313–331.

43. Megill, "Introduction," 11.

44. Gergen, "Mechanical Self," 266.

45. Ibid., 277. "Most importantly, an objective mind is one that stands in a reflective relationship to the external world. It is a mind that is accurately attuned to the nuances and variations in external conditions. One who is objective 'sees things for what they are,' 'is in touch with reality,' or 'takes a good look at things.' The image of the individual as machine is now apposite, because reinstated here is the Enlightenment view of the cosmos as one great array of mechanistic relations between causes and resulting effects" (267).

46. On objectivity as a process of knowledge production see Johannes Fabian, "Ethnographic Objectivity Revisited: From Rigor to Vigor," in Megill, *Rethinking Objectivity,* 81–108; as well as his important early essay, "History, Language and Anthropology," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 1 (1971): 19–47.

47. Megill, "Introduction," 5–6. Interestingly, Megill points out that "disciplinary objectivity-claims are *also* products of epistemological insecurity. They are likely to arise only when the faith in one indivisible truth that accompanies absolute objectivity seems unsustainable, and when there are doubts about the reliability of personal vision."

48. For a more extensive discussion of "style," see chapter 1, section entitled "The 'Ideal World' of Style."

49. T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932), 13–22.

50. Megill, "Introduction," 8.

51. Fischl responds to Bonnard's painting in an interview with Robert Enright, "Core Intimacies: Eric Fischl on the Art of Pierre Bonnard," *BorderCrossings* 17, no. 3 (1998): 56–61. Consider Fischl:

> Part of the problem is that artists of my generation were not educated. . . . Paying too much attention to history would just clog your mind, make you imitative instead of avant-garde. In fact it's incredibly disrespectful of the importance of history that we train people to be amateurs. I deeply resent the kind of flattery that replaced discipline. . . . Based on personal experience, I would say that there is a difference between painting and art. There are moments when you're looking at a work that is hundreds of years old and it's talking to you. You feel connected to the artist; he is transmitting a kind of truth, and it works today the way it worked then.

Quoted in Frederic Tuten, "Fischl's Italian Hours," interview with Eric Fischl, *Art in America,* November 1996, 79, 82. On "the weight of modernist discourse" that Fischl "had to shrug off when he attempted to join the tradition of narrative realism" in painting, see Arthur Danto, "Formation, Success, and Mastery: Eric Fischl through Three Decades," in *Eric Fischl, 1970–2000* (New York: Monacelli, 2000), 11–24. (This quote is on pages 15–16.)

52. Holland Carter, "Postmodern Tourist," *Art in America,* April 1991, 154. For Cotter, "Fischl might well become what one always suspected he could be: the painter of history whom we had long ago resigned ourselves to be doing without" (183).

53. Aby Warburg, *Handelskammer,* notebook, 1928, 44. Cited in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg,* 253.

54. For a more recent expression, see Charles Taylor, "Understanding and Explanation in the *Geisteswissenschaften,*" in *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule,* ed. Steven Holtzman and Christopher Leich (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), 191–210; and in a related vein, Giorgio Agamben, *The Man without Content* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

55. J. Hillis Miller, *On Literature* (London: Routledge, 2002), 29. See also Roland Barthes's distinction between "readerly" and "writerly" narratives in *S/Z* (New York: Hill

and Wang, 1974). Using the term "the space of the aesthetic," I am following Marice Blanchot's conception of literature. See Marice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature* [1955], trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), as well as *The Book to Come* [1959], trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), esp. chap. 1, "Encountering the Imaginary," on Odysseus's encounter with the Sirens.

56. Miller, *On Literature,* 94. Miller notes that performative language is "basic to literature: using words has a conjuring power that charms the reader into believing in a fiction or at least into suspending disbelief" (111).

57. Wind, *Art and Anarchy,* 32.

58. On identity politics see the powerful essay by Cornel West, "The New Cultural Politics of Difference," in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture,* ed. Russell Ferguson et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1990), 19–36.

59. For Panofsky's critique of Wölfflin see chapter 1. For a more recent argument along these lines see Leo Steinberg, "The Eye Is Part of the Mind," in *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth Century Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 289–306.

60. Ernst Cassirer, *Kant's Life and Thought* [1918], trans. James Haden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 312, 325.

## Afterword

1. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments,* ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 35–62. See the new translation of *The Odyssey* by Robert Fagles (New York: Viking, 1996).

2. In addition to Adorno's excursus see Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Continuum, 1947), esp. chap. 3, "The Revolt of Nature"; and Maria Papastephanou, "Ulysses' Reason, Nobody's Fault: Reason, Subjectivity and the Critique of Enlightenment," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 26, no. 6 (2000): 47–59.

3. For an analysis of the Kantian sublime, see chapter 2, section entitled "Cool Idols."

4. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 38. On this point see also Ernst Cassirer, *The Logic of the Cultural Sciences: Five Studies* [1942], trans. S. G. Lofts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 27. Compare Odysseus's beating of his breast to Georges Bataille's conception of the erotic, which he declares can be suppressed only through rational work. Georges Bataille, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality* [1957], trans. Mary Dalwood (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1986).

5. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* 27. See also Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason,* where he observes that it is with Socrates that the "subject begins to think of himself—as opposed to outward reality—as the highest of all ideas" (134–135).

6. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Adorno also describes the regression of the subject vis-à-vis society. As Robert Hullot-Kentor remarks in "Notes on *Dialectic of Enlightenment:* Translating the Odysseus Essay," *New German Critique* no. 56 (Spring/Summer 1992): 105, "Adorno formulates the dialectic of enlightenment as the process by which the domination of nature results in the regression to nature in the form of a society that is second nature; history as domination is a natural history that recreates barbarism." On the ways language denies the space between things see Walter Benjamin, "Doctrine of the Similar" and "On the Mimetic Faculty," both trans. Edmund Jephcott, in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* vol. 2, *1927–1934,* ed. Michael Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 694–698, 720–722.

7. In this sense *The Odyssey* and the idealized Kantian subject might be considered part of the development of modern individualism. On the mythic nature of analogous male heroes see Ian Watt, *Myths of Modern Individualism: Faust, Don Quixote, Don Juan, Robinson Crusoe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

8. The gendering of nature has its own history, of course, one that goes back to Aristotelian definitions of feminine matter and masculine mind. On the gendering of nature and its implications see Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (London: Routledge, 1992); Karen Lang, "The Body in the Garden," in *Landscapes of Memory and Experience,* ed. Jan Birksted (London: Spon, 2000), 107–127; Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (San Francisco: Harper and Row,

1980); Sherry Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in *Woman, Culture, and Society,* ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 67–87; and David Summers, "Form and Gender," in *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations,* ed. Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1994), 384–411.

9. Beckmann signed his drawing "Beckmann/A46," indicating his exile in Amsterdam, and on the verso he wrote, "Spaziergang 7. Februar 46." Beckmann drew a similar configuration of a monumental nude stretched across an expanse of ground in his lithograph *The Fall of Man* (*Sündenfall*), plate 14 of his 1946 series, Day and Dream. For an illustration of this lithograph see James Hofmaier, *Max Beckmann: Catalogue Raisonné of His Prints* (Bern: Gallery Kornfeld, 1990), 862–863.

10. In Amsterdam on February 6, 1946, Beckmann wrote in his diary: "Was in Zandvoort and walked over to Overeen, rather strenuous, but the sea was once again the sea and said good day, Mr. Beckmann. Vertigo on rails and bridges, relatively little pain." Cited in Fritz Erpel, *Max Beckmann: Leben im Werk: Die Selbstbildnisse* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1985), unpaged.

11. Between 1885 and 1909 Klinger created the twelve etchings that comprise the series On Death, Part II, though certain ideas contained in the prints date back to 1879. A first edition of the print cycle, published in 1898, included six prints. Three more prints were published in 1904, and the rest, including *The Philosopher,* followed in 1910. A study for *The Philosopher,* in black ink and dated 1885, contains the inscription "SAPIENTER/IGNORABERIS." See *Max Klinger, Bestandkatalog der Bildwerke, Gemälde und Zeichungen im Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig* (Leipzig: E. A. Seemann, 1995), 207. On Death, Part II continues the theme of the print cycle On Death, Part I, first published in 1889. In the first part of the cycle Klinger focuses on images of death conceived as an unexpected stroke of fate. In On Death, Part II he moves from an exterior consideration of death—as a force that strikes arbitrarily—"to a more encompassing view, one in which the incidents of the first series are given over to the depiction of larger principles, such that exterior horror is now opposed to inner resolution, thus making possible a harmonious conclusion." Max Klinger in Hans Wolfgang Singer, *Max Klingers Radierungen, Stiche und Steindrucke* [1909] (San Francisco: Alan Wofsky Fine Arts, 1991), 89. On the artist's preoccupation with, and rendering of, death see Thomas Matuszak, "Todesdarstellungen im graphischen Werk Max Klingers," in *Max Klinger,* exhibition catalogue (Kunsthalle Bielefeld, Universitätskunstsammlung Göttingen, Kunsthalle Tübingen, and Museum Wiesbaden, 1976–77), 289–296.

12. The ruler, the genius (artist), and the philosopher are conceived in On Death, Part II, along with images of plague, war, and misery, since, the artist writes, "with the summa of recognition of respect grows the capacity for suffering." On this point, and on the positioning of the plates in the cycle as a whole, see Dirk Finselberger, "Üntersuchungen zu Opus XIII, 'Vom Tode II,'" in *Max Klinger,* 297–303.

13. This point is lyrically described by Giorgio de Chirico. He writes in 1921 on another of Klinger's prints: "As I have already said, it possesses the dramatic sense of certain moments in the cinema in which people inhabiting tragedy and modern life appear frozen in the spectrality of a moment, scenes that are terrible and real." Giorgio de Chirico, "Max Klinger," in *Metaphysical Art,* ed. Massimo Carrà, trans. Caroline Tisdall (New York: Praeger, 1971), 133.

14. "Nearly all of the second part of *On Death* is the result of long-cultivated study of *Parerga and Paralipomena.* For a long time this book has belonged to my daily literary fodder." Letter from the artist, cited in *Max Klinger: Wege zum Gesamtkunstwerk* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1984), 286; original citation from Hans Wolfgang Singer, ed., *Briefe von Max Klinger* (Berlin: Rembrandt Verlag, 1976), 67–68; Arthur Hübscher, "Betrachtungen zu den beiden zentralen Problemkomplexen Tod und Liebe in der Graphik Max Klingers—in Verbindung mit seinen Theorie über Graphik" (Ph.D. diss., University of Halle, 1970), 100–110; and Martin Michalski, *Max Klinger: künstlerische Entwicklung und Wandel weltanschaulicher Gehalte in den Jahren 1878–1910* (Augsburg: AV-Verlag, 1986), 7–14.

15. Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena,* Gesamtausgabe, 5:24, 54. Cited in Alexander Dückers, *Max Klinger* (Berlin: Rembrandt Verlag, 1976), 67. I touch on this point in my conclusion, section titled "Manners and Modes of Objectivity."

16. Novalis [Friedrich von Hardenberg], in *Tenemos* 9 (1988), 119.

17. Klinger renders this desire into an image that corresponds with his own artistic preoccupations: "The searching man reaches past the earth (female nature) for the universe and finds only his own reflection" (Der forschende Mensch greift über die Erde (weibliches Wesen) hinweg nach dem Weltall und findet nur sein eigenes Spiegelbild). See *Max Klinger: Leben und Werk in Daten und Bildern,* ed. Stella Wega Mathieu (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1976), 154. Consider, finally, G. W. F. Hegel from *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art,* trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 31: "Man draws out of himself and puts before himself what he is . . . in order . . . to enjoy in the shape of things . . . an external realization of himself."

18. Menzel's drawing is signed at the center-bottom, "A. M.," and annotated in the upper right, "Ant: Bronze," and in the lower right, "Mus: Salzb: Keltin."

19. On Menzel's tendency to bring objects into a "personal ideogram signifying emotional and aesthetic concerns," see Françoise Forster-Hahn, "Public Concerns—Private Longings: Adolph Menzel's *Studio Wall* (1872)," *Art History* 25, no. 2 (April 2002): 206–239.

20. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays,* trans. Nicholas Walker, ed. Robert Bernasconi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 16.

21. George Steiner, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

22. Charles Taylor, "The Moral Topography of the Self," in *Hermeneutics and Psychological Theory,* ed. Stanley Messer, Louis Sass, and Robert Woolfolk (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 298–320. Susan Buck-Morss has recently argued for an inclusion of somatic or bodily knowledge in aesthetic experience. See her essays "Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered," *October* 62 (Fall 1992): 3–41; and "The City as Dreamworld and Catastrophe," *October* 73 (Summer 1995): 3–26.

23. Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (New York: Vintage, 1983), 20.

24. Cited in Susan Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 103.

25. In Hegel's slave and the development of his "unhappy consciousness," we encounter a similar paradox. Judith Butler describes how in "the passage from bondage to unhappy consciousness," the body of the slave is "no longer subjected as an external instrument of labor, [yet] the body is nevertheless still split off from consciousness. Reconstituted as an interior alien, the body is sustained through its disavowal and as that which for consciousness must remain disavowed." Judith Butler, "Stubborn Attachment, Bodily Subjection: Hegel on the Unhappy Consciousness," in *Intersections: Nineteenth-Century Philosophy and Contemporary Theory,* ed. Tilottama Rajan and David Clark (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 181.

26. On the spectral epistemology of Western philosophy see Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman,* trans. Gillian Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); and Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

27. I have adapted this model of identity from Schelling's philosophy. See F. W. J. Schelling, *Ausgewählte Schriften,* ed. Manfred Frank, 6 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985); and the "Stuttgart Seminars," trans. and ed. Thomas Pfau, in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory: Three Essays by F. W. J. Schelling* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 195–243. A lucid introduction in English to Schelling's philosophy is Andrew Bowie, *Schelling and Modern European Philosophy: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1993).

28. To this end it is interesting to consider *On Beauty* (*An die Schönheit*), the final print of Klinger's cycle On Death, Part II, which illustrates a naked man kneeling on grass before a wide expanse of ocean. Here Klinger indicates how man finds deliverance from life, and fulfillment of his longing, by entering into the universe ("im Eingehen in das All"). As opposed to the subject of *The Philosopher,* then, who, Klinger writes, "reaches past the earth (female nature) for the universe [*das Weltall*] and finds only his own reflection," in the final print of the cycle fulfillment is indicated for a subject who enters into the universe [*das All*]. For an illustration of this print see Dückers, *Max Klinger,* 73.

29. Schopenhauer's distinction between the will of the subject and the Will of the world repeats Kant's separation of phenomenal and noumenal worlds. Yet where Kant believed that the subject could never know the noumenal world of the *Ding an sich,* or the thing-in-itself, Schopenhauer maintains that one can know the Will of the world through an inner will within one's own body.

30. Arthur Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation,* trans. E. F. J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1966), 1:178–179. Friedrich Nietzsche undoubtedly had this passage in mind when, in *Genealogy of Morals* [1887], trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1969), he described the coming "to reason" of the subject as a cruel process (62). He rallies the philosophers of the future: "Henceforth, my dear philosophers, let us be on guard against the dangerous old conceptual fiction that posited a 'pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject'" (119).

31. Cheryl Foster, "Schopenhauer and Aesthetic Recognition," in *Schopenhauer, Philosophy, and the Arts,* ed. Dale Jacquette (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 142; on the genius see 141–143.

32. Tilottama Rajan and David Clark, "Introduction," in Rajan and Clark, *Intersections,* 32.

33. Schopenhauer, *World as Will and Representation,* 1:205.

34. Alexander Pühringer amplifies on this point: "Viola's work *appears* in singular 'works,' but it *is* one *whole,* a work in progress. . . . [The] conceptual or spiritual *ground* that appears in the works may be identical but it is not shown in identical ways; the works exhibit, rather, different *aspects* of it, that is, of the *human condition.*" A. Pühringer, ed., *Bill Viola* (Stuttgart: Ritter Klagenhurt Verlag, 1994), 78.

35. "Art has always been a whole-body, physical experience. This sensuality is the basis of its true conceptual and intellectual nature, and is inseparable from it." Bill Viola, Otto Neumaier, and Alexander Pühringer, "Putting the Whole Back Together," in *Bill Viola: Reasons for Knocking at an Empty House: Writings 1973–1994,* ed. Robert Violette with Bill Viola (Cambridge: Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 265.

36. "Unseen images" is Bill Viola's descriptive phrase for his art as well as the title of an exhibition of his work. See Marie Luise Syring, ed., *Bill Viola: Unseen Images/Nie gesehne Bilder/Images jamais vues* (Düsseldorf: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1992).

37. Ursula Frohne, "Motifs of Time: An Anthology of the Time Phenomenon in Contemporary Art," in *Contemporary Art: The Collection of the ZKM: Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe,* ed. Heinrich Klotz (Munich: Prestel, 1997), 45.

38. This experience would be especially striking for a nonwhite viewer, since Viola represents the stations of earthly life with an all-white cast. In this sense, the artist remains within a "humanist" frame of reference that imputes universality for a Caucasian subject.

39. Bill Viola, in *Bill Viola,* catalogue of exhibition curated by David Ross and Peter Sellars (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1997), 112.

40. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics,* trans. and ed. David Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), xvi.

41. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem," in Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics,* 3.

42. To this end, I affirm an original meaning of culture as articulated by Hannah Arendt in her essay "The Crisis in Culture: Its Social and Politics Significance," in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* [1954] (London: Penguin, 1985), 211–212. For a brief discussion of this definition see chapter 4, section entitled "Benjamin Reads Riegl." As Arendt persuasively argues, this understanding of culture "indicates an attitude of loving care and stands in sharp contrast to all efforts to subject nature to the domination of man."

43. Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Selected Writings/Walter Benjamin,* vol. 4, *1938–1940,* ed. Howard Eiland and Michael Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2003), 337. The Valéry epigraph is from "Avant-propos à la connaissance de la déesse," in Paul Valéry, *Oeuvres,* ed. Jean Hytier (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), 1:1269–1280.

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